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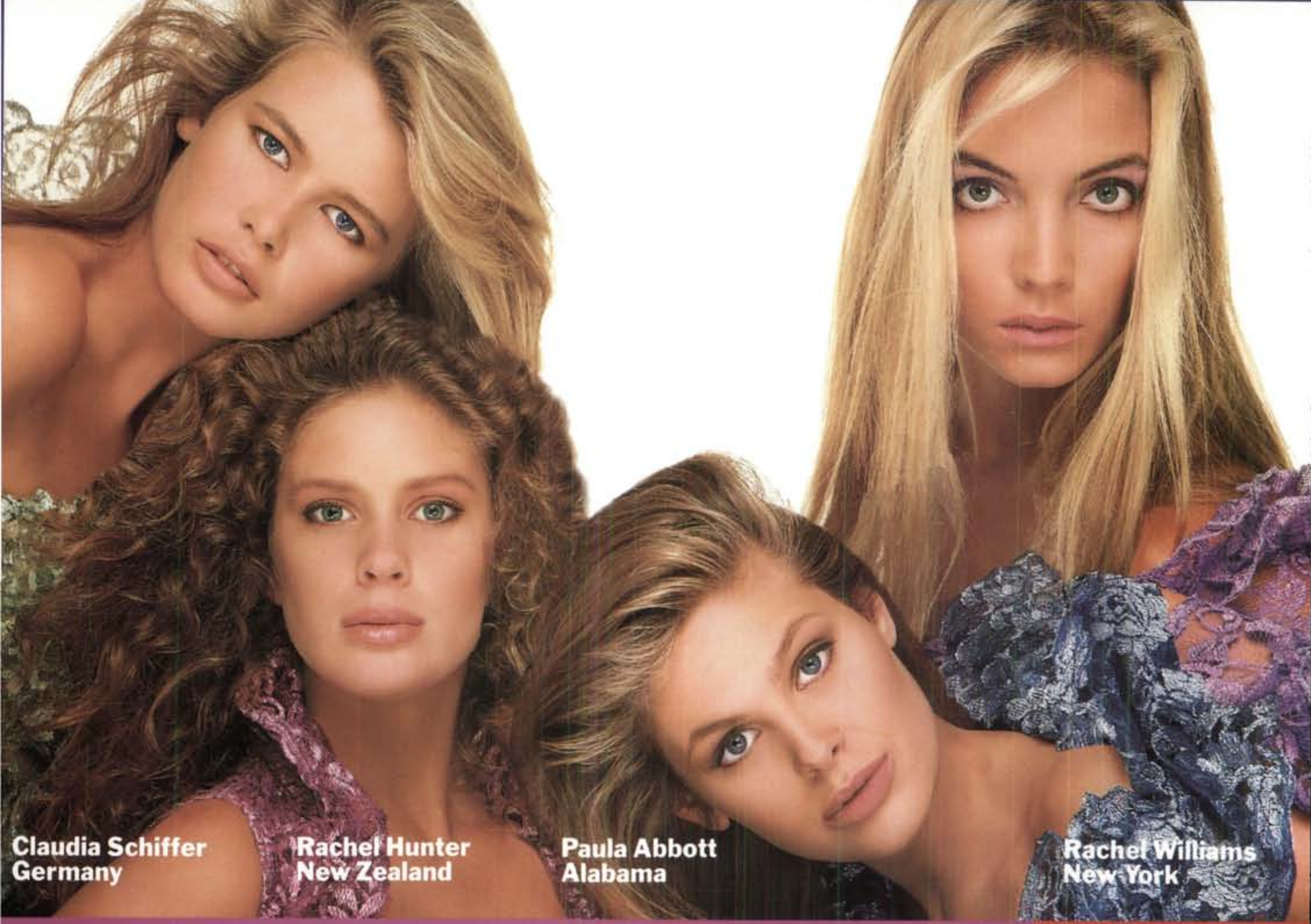
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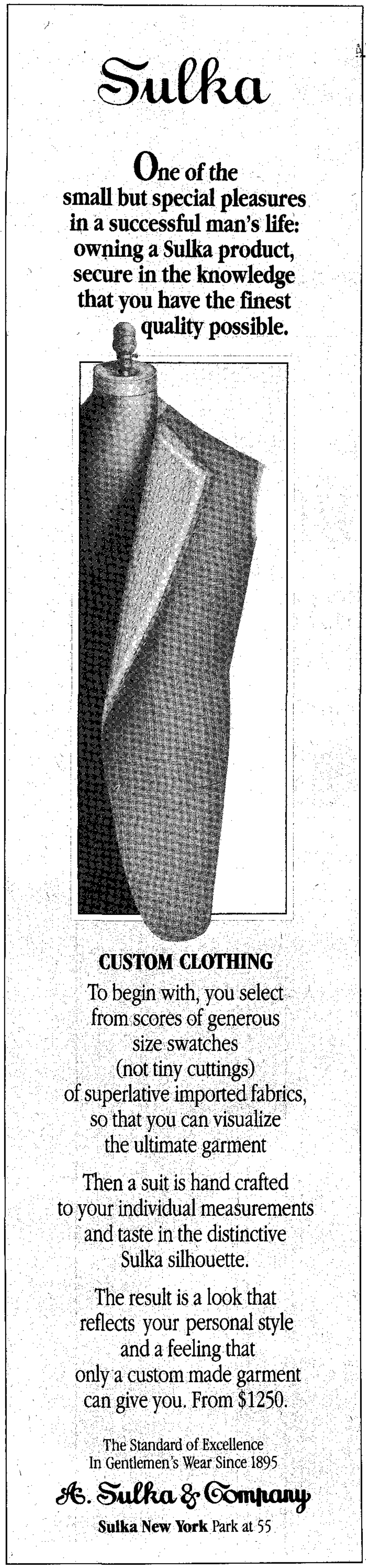
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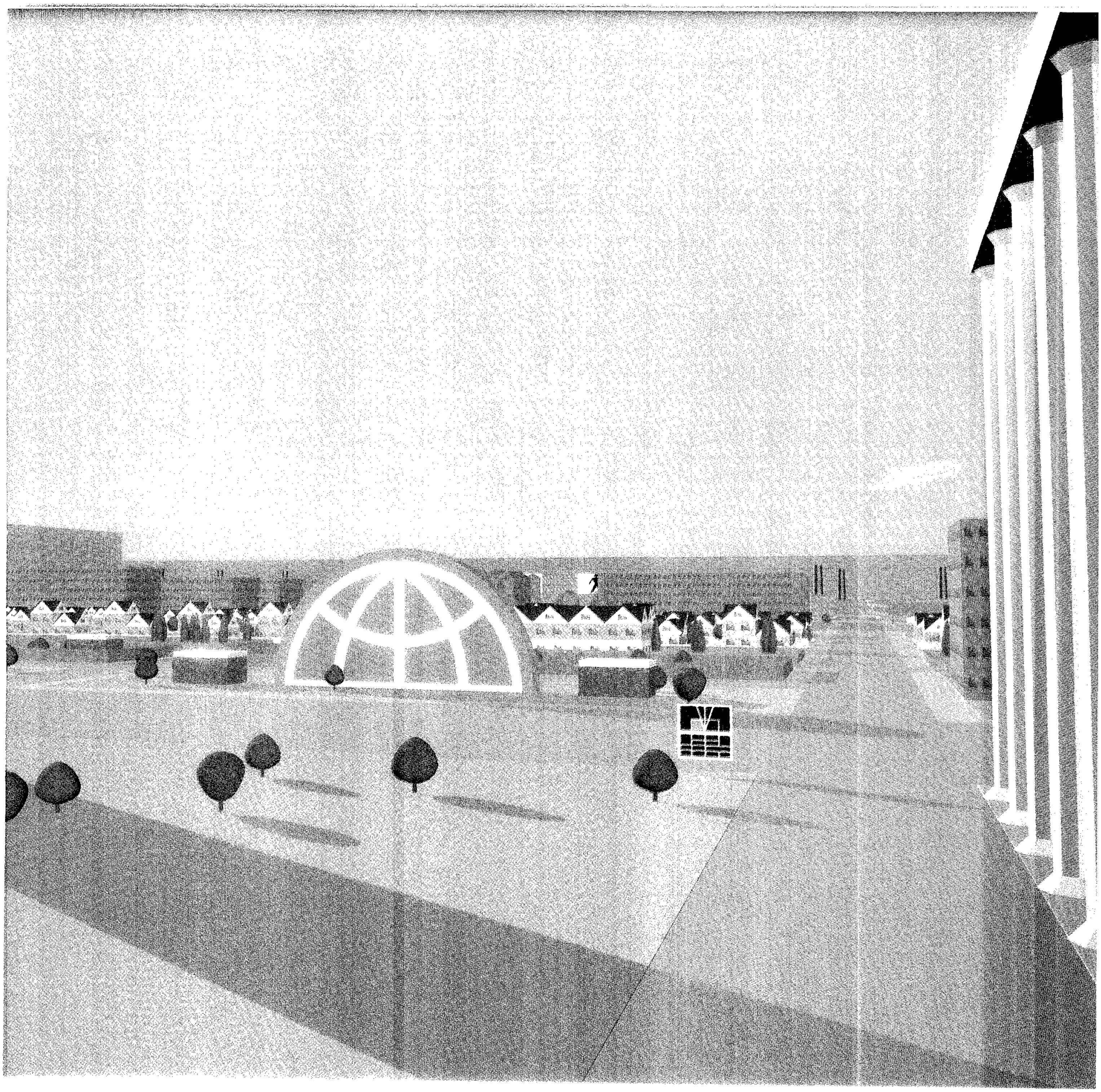

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

THE Boscobel estate, in Garrison, New York, was the site of a tight little production of "Twelfth Night" that we caught earlier this summer, put on by the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival. The performance, which was housed in a tent on the estate grounds, boasted lively, intelligent acting, a lucid and moving reading of the play, and a good deal of directorial panache—all of which created an esprit de corps on both sides of the metaphorical footlights that we're not used to witnessing at open-air productions of Shakespeare. Most of the members of the company were—like the director, Terrence O'Brien—virtual unknowns. Only Paul Bates (who brought a knowing charm to several roles) has been featured by Joseph Papp in a New York Shakespeare Festival production; yet there wasn't one among the cast that you wouldn't be glad to see on the Delacorte stage, in Central Park, and there were quite a few—Wendy Radford (Olivia), Deborah Singer (Viola), Ross Hindley (Sir Andrew Aguecheek), Thomas Nahrwold (Feste), and particularly John Hutton (Malvolio)—who would do that venue proud.

The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival production of "Twelfth Night" was uplifting, too, because it suggested that some of the questions that are raised endlessly by Mr. Papp's stagings have easy answers. One of the actors here was black; another had a slight accent; no one in the cast spoke the King's English. Yet none of this seemed to matter one whit to the production, any more than it mattered that the directorial innovations included a couple of officers of the law straight out of a spaghetti Western and a gratuitous rendition of the theme song from "Green Acres." What this simple and unpretentious production suggested is that there are no rules about what you can and cannot do: if the actors and the director love and understand Shakespeare, then the audience will love and understand the play. Anything else—comic business, interracial casting, or nods in the direction of contemporaneity—is just so much icing on the cakes we should be getting with our ale.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

The Aching Heart of Samuel Kleinerman—A play by Marion André about a German Jewish family in 1936 Berlin. With Kristin Norton, Jeff Reade, and James Terpis. Previews Aug. 25-27. Opens Aug. 28 at 7, and will run through Sept. 16. (Riverwest Theatre, 155 Bank St. 243-0259.)

Privates on Parade—Jim Dale and Simon Jones star in the 1977 musical by Peter Nichols (book and lyrics) and Denis King (score). Opens Aug. 22 at 8. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

Sweeney Todd—Bob Gunton and Beth Fowler in the York Theatre Company's production of the Sondheim musical, which had a brief run uptown last spring. Susan H. Schulman is the director. In previews. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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27	28	29	30			

NEW THIS SEASON

Aristocrats—Brian Friel's portrait of the family of Judge O'Donnell, of Ballybeg Hall, in Donegal, is witty, ironic, and loving. It is faultlessly performed by Niall Buggy (an astonishing actor who got his start at the Abbey Theatre), John Pankow, and John Christopher Jones, among others, under the direction of Robin Lefèvre. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/8/89.) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-0102.)

Best Friends—A new play by John Voulgaris that examines the volatile relationship of two lifelong friends, portrayed by Chris A. Kelly and David Conaway. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

Black and Blue—An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (2/6/89, under Dancing.) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

Buzzsaw Berkeley—A new musical comedy, conceived by Christopher Ashley and Doug Wright. The score and lyrics are by Michael-John LaChiusa, and the book is by Mr. Wright. Ethyl Eichelberger and Keith Reddin are in the cast. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

Call Me Ethel—Rita McKenzie as Ethel Merman in a one-woman show written and directed by Chris Powich. Presented by the American Jewish Theatre. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

Does a Tiger Wear a Necktie?—A revised version of a 1969 play by Don Petersen. With a sixteen-member cast led by Peter Jay Fernandez and Bernard Rachelle. (Sheridan Playhouse, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

The Heidi Chronicles—Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With a superb cast, including Joan Allen, Boyd Gaines, Peter Friedman, Drew McVety, and Joanne Camp. (12/26/88) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Hot Minute—A musical revue, conceived by Melanie Mintz, about backup singers and their aspirations toward the big time. Final performances Aug. 23-24 at 8 and 11. (Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. 228-6300.)

Jerome Robbins' Broadway—A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. The evening is an orgy of family entertainment, a display of theatrical arts and crafts, and a canonization of Robbins and his era. Whether the fifties was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (3/13/89, under Dancing.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives—Comedy skits and vignettes about gender and its role in society, written and performed by Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

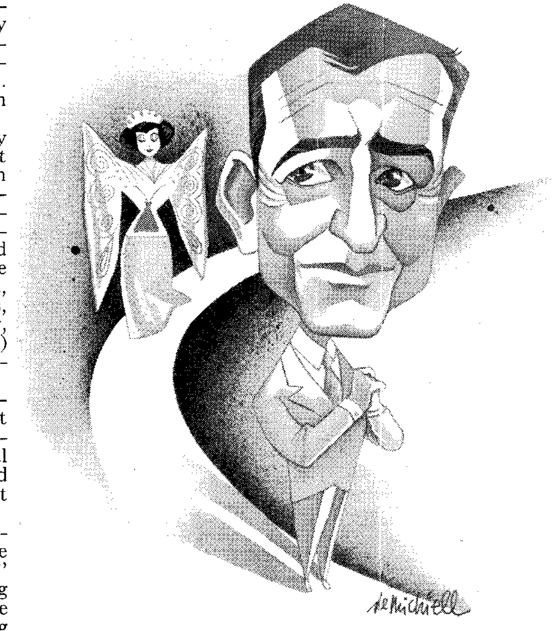
The Lady in Question—Charles Busch's new play, set in Germany during the Second World War, is the perfect entertainment for a hot summer night. It's less pointedly a parody of one genre or movie than his last work, "Psycho Beach Party," was, and more a travesty of an entire week's worth of TNT programming, compressed into a single evening of theatre. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Largely New York—It would be a mistake to assume that Bill Irwin's dance-mime extravaganza is fundamentally boring because it lacks words; in fact, it has the best "book" on Broadway. The piece is partly a sendup of theatrical technology, partly a comment on the ills that beset a pluralistic society, and partly a debate about art. Irwin puts onstage all the conflicts, tensions, and antagonisms of modern city life and resolves them by means of an invented language. His solution is unrealistic—it obtains only in a theatre—but what makes the message so uplifting is that to understand it you have to learn a new idiom. (5/15/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Lend Me a Tenor—The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. Philip Bosco, Victor Garber, Tovah Feldshuh, J. Smith-Cameron, Caroline Lagerfelt, Ron Holgate, Jane Connell, and Jeff Brooks make up the splendid cast. (3/13/89) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Light Opera of Manhattan—Presenting Gilbert and Sullivan's **pirates of penzance.** With Raymond Allen as the Major-General, Susan Davis Holmes as Mabel, Michael Bertolini as the Pirate King, Robert Randle as Frederic, and Kate Weidman as Ruth. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Sept. 10.)

Love Letters—Staged readings of A. R. Gurney's two-character play. Aug. 22-27, Stockard Channing and John Rubinstein, and Aug. 29-Sept. 3 Dana Ivey and George Segal. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)



Tony Randall in "M. Butterfly"

Mandy Patinkin in Concert: Dress Casual—So called, presumably, because the *chanteur* gets to wear sneaks and a T-shirt—a costume that pretty much sets the tone for an evening of glorious song and good fun. Patinkin here tends to sing only what is either very, very simple (and old) or very, very complicated (and Sondheim). Half the show's pleasure derives from Patinkin's between-song (in some cases even mid-song) patter and the relationship that develops between him and his able pianist, Paul Ford. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Only Kidding!—Jim Geoghan's comedy about

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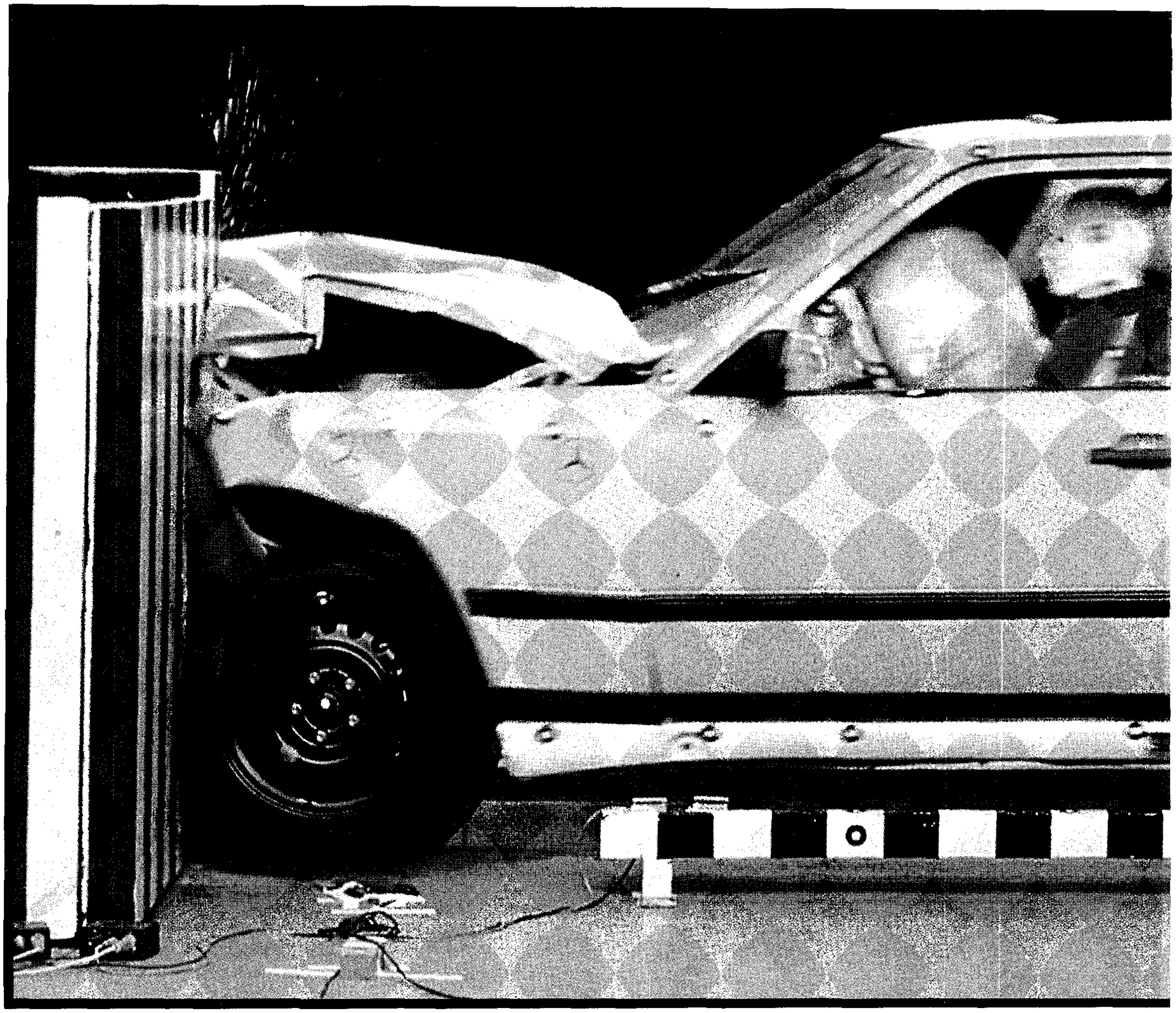

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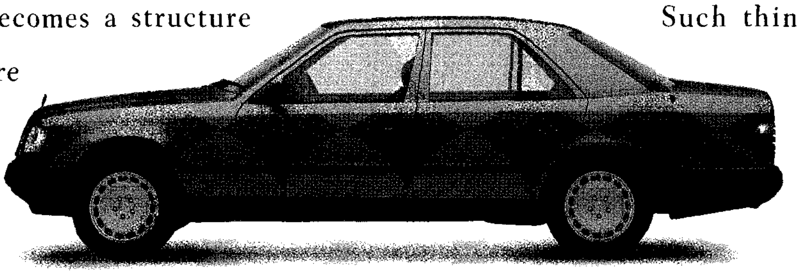

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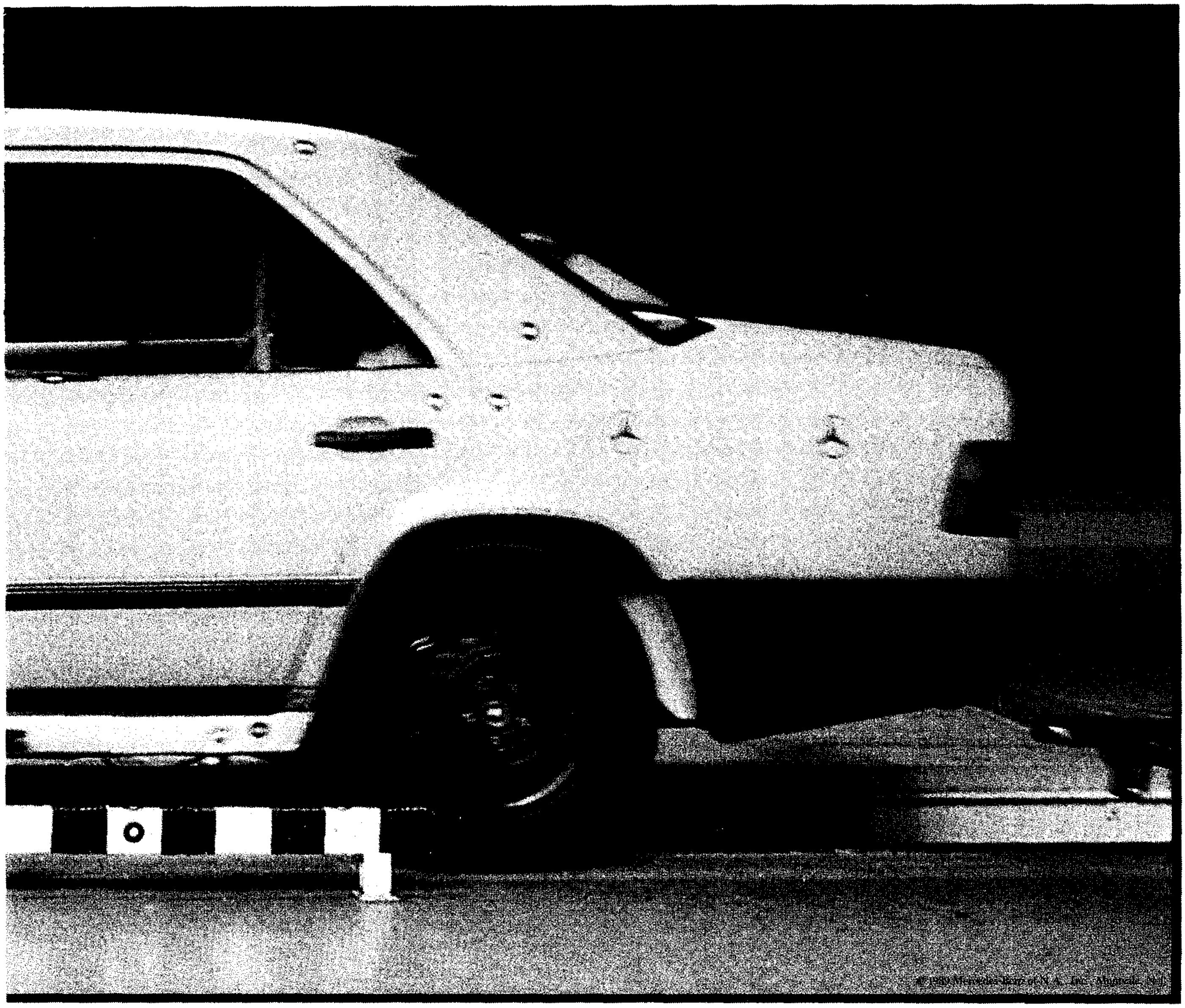

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standup comedians, in all their panic and desperation, has the ring of authenticity, and jokes that invariably pay off. (One monologue, about a Greek restaurant, is a knockout.) The characters are an aging Catskills type; a young comedy team still scrambling for a foothold; a jumpy writer; and a beef-brained manager. All the actors do well, under the lively direction of Larry Arrick. (5/29/89) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Other People's Money—Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York stockbroker's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. Kevin Conway can seldom have been better or funnier than he is as Bronx-born Lawrence Garfinkle. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Shenandoah—John Cullum reprises his original role in a revival of the 1975 musical, which was based on James Lee Barrett's 1965 film of the same name. Score by Gary Geld, lyrics by Peter Udell, and book by Mr. Barrett, Philip Rose (who once again directs), and Mr. Udell. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102. Closes Sept. 2.)

Shirley Valentine—Willy Russell's play about a Liverpool housewife who, feeling herself engulfed by drab domesticity, flies off to Greece, where she finds a temporary lover and lives happily ever after. With Ellen Burstyn in the title, and only, role. Directed by Simon Callow. (2/27/89) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Showing Off—As comedy revues go, this one—written by Douglas Bernstein and Denis Markell—isn't at all bad. The winning performances by Mr. Bernstein, Marilyn Pasekoff, Mark Sawyer, and Veanne Cox often make the material seem better than it is, but ultimately they don't compensate for the over-all smugness of what is essentially life-style comedy. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

Soul Survivor—A comedy by Anthony Bruno, with Jack Wrangler. (Sanford Meisner, 164 Eleventh Ave., at 22nd St. 869-3530.)

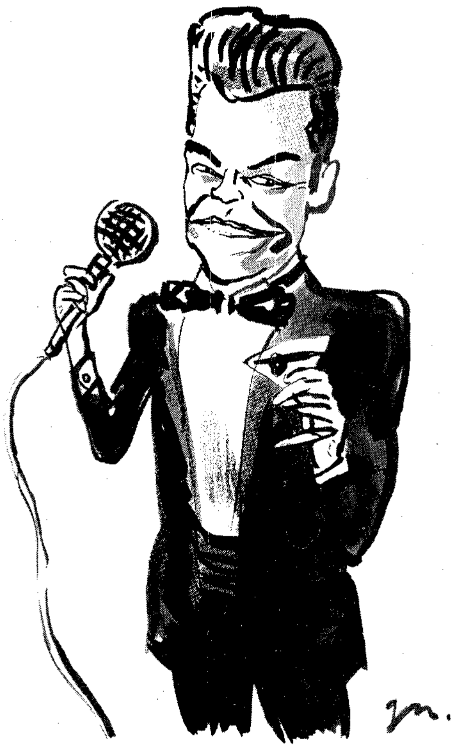
Titus Andronicus—The second, and final, offering in the New York Shakespeare Festival's summer series in the Park. With Donald Moffat, Kate Mulgrew, and Keith David. The director is Michael Maggio. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. Closes Sept. 3. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

LONG RUNS

ANYTHING GOES: This exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The company, which includes Leslie Uggams, Gerry Vichi, and Gregg Edelman, does more than justice to the words and score. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Sept. 3.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently turned twenty-nine. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1989:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Dorothy Kiara, David B. McDonald, and Michael McGrath. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **I COULD GO ON LIP-SYNCHING!:** This one-man variety show made up of cultural arcana is kind of weird, kind of quirky, and kind of brilliant. Performed by John Epperson and written by him and Justin Ross (who directed), it uses the rhetorical tactics of drag theatre to attack some of the Big Questions, managing not so much to raise lip-synching to an art as to transform aural montage into psychodrama. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 627-2556.) . . . **INTO THE WOODS:** This musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. Directed by Mr. Lapine. The cast includes Ellen Foley and Chip Zien. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Closes Sept. 3.) . . . **M. BUTTERFLY:** Tony Randall has joined the cast of David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play. With B. D. Wong. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **RUMORS:** This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. It is acted to perfection by, among others, Ron Leibman, Joyce Van Patten, Charles Brown, and Cynthia Darlow, under the impeccable direction of Gene Saks. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wise-cracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)

DANCE

AT the Naturemax Theatre in the American Museum of Natural History, there is a screen the size of some New York studio apartments. It accommodates a special kind of you-are-there movie—the system is called IMAX—in which the images are so big, the camera angles so shrewd, the sound so enveloping that you feel you really are hang gliding over farmland or shooting white-water rapids on a rubber raft. The current IMAX film is "To the Limit," a thirty-eight-minute essay about three athletes of world-wide renown and how their bodies work, on the muscular and cellular levels. One of the subjects is the young Bolshoi ballerina Nina Ananiashvili, seen rehearsing with her coach (ballerina Raisa Struchkova), and performing as Myrtha in "Giselle" and, with Bolshoi principal Irek Mukhamedov, in the "Don Quixote" pas de deux. Both Ananiashvili and Mukhamedov are jumpers with soaring elevation, and the camera falls in love with their jumps in slow motion, sometimes to the right music for the ballet, sometimes to Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. These sequences are mesmerizing. Still, you never feel that you're actually becoming Ananiashvili in a grand jeté, the way you're led to believe that you've become the film's mountain climber dangling from a Yosemite peak or an Olympic skier crashing into a fence. Even four stories high, the dancers remain themselves, while you remain in your chair watching them leap clear. That is its own pleasure.



Buster Poindexter at the Ritz

NIGHT LIFE

MUSICIANS are creatures of the night, but in summertime they can sometimes also be seen in the light of day—at the many free outdoor festivals around town. These events often serve as dress rehearsals for nighttime gigs. Remmy Ongala & Orchestre Super Matamila's recent show at Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park, for example, was only the first of the band's four engagements that day. As we set out for the park, the oppressive heat made us grateful to be a nighttime reporter, but once under the spell of Ongala's exuberant dance music we forgot about the weather. In this setting—the musicians revelling onstage, children climbing in the shade trees that line the park, people fanning themselves and swaying to the music—the heat seemed natural: we felt a little closer to the equator. This show marked the U.S. début of Ongala, a Zairean singer, songwriter, and guitarist famous throughout Tanzania, where he lives and works. His music—a seductive blend of shifting rhythms and repeated, interwoven guitar lines—is similar to that of other African artists (King Sunny Adé, Papa Wemba) who have been a hit with American audiences.

Some bands adapt to daylight better than others. Over at the Central Park Band Shell that same afternoon, we heard Tav Falco & Panther Burns, a Memphis band that plays a loose, raucous mix of rockabilly, blues, and trash-rock. While we normally associate outdoor concerts with a California Jam-type atmosphere—T-shirts, cut-offs, good clean fun—this group's demented appearance reminded us more of a John Waters movie. Falco himself was dressed in Vegas night-club wear—a shiny blue vintage suit and a wide-collared fuchsia shirt open at the neck. In an age of cordless microphones and digital samplers, this band opts for beat-up old Fender amps and sixties guitars (hence their mean and dirty sound). After a while, they were joined by the Memphis songwriter Cordell Jackson. When Jackson, a slight, retirement-age woman with a frizzy beehive hairdo, wire-rimmed glasses, and the placid expression of a truck-stop waitress, sat down on a stool and began furiously strumming a not-quite-in-tune guitar, the show's sense of incongruity reached new proportions.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and a row of Serrano hams hang over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. Singer and Broadway habitué Christine Andreas kicks off a three-week engagement on Aug. 22.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway at 105th St. (749-2228)—The long-gone midtown pleasure dome (1949-65) after which this airy two-tiered operation is named had a midget m.c. named Pee Wee Marquette, caged finches, and Bird himself; the new room has waiters and waitresses in Reeboks and bowties, a rainbow-colored Wurlitzer jukebox, and jazz people of various modern schools. Pianist **MIKE LONGO,** who rode the bench for Dizzy Gillespie for half a dozen years, performs with a trio on Aug. 22; the Ralph Moore quintet punches in Aug. 25-26; quick-change pianist **JAKI BYARD** plays in a duo on Aug. 28; and on Aug. 29 alto saxophonist **LOU DONALDSON** and friends celebrate the music of the man who gave this place its name. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Bitter End, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—The free passes to this club could pave most of Greenwich Village—and they often do. The Bitter End was all abuzz in the seventies, when it was a stopping point for the sort of singers whose records you can now order from television: Gordon Lightfoot, Melissa Manchester, Neil Sedaka. Aside from the rest rooms, which are what you'd expect to find during wartime, the place is pleasant enough. There's an Atari video game constantly aglow in the corner; a platinum record from Blood, Sweat, & Tears; and a doorman who, when you ask what time the band's coming on, will tell you anything you want to hear.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St. near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—On the back wall of this jazz club there's a neon version of the Manhattan skyline, with a crescent moon and two stars attendant upon it—one of the best examples of inert-gas folk art we know of. **MICHEL CAMILO,** a Latin-tinged jazz pianist from the Dominican Republic, alternates sets with the singer and multi-instrumentalist Jon Lucien Aug. 22-27. Beginning Aug. 29, the place belongs to the **DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND,** an eight-piece outfit from New Orleans that recently lent some punch to Elvis Costello's album "Spike." Music from nine. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A crowded, duskily lit neighborhood bar, where pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, drummers compete for your ear with professional conversationalists. Truth and beauty usually prevail. **KIRK LIGHTSEY,** a bop-rooted pianist, will be around Aug. 21-26 (with bassist **DON PATE**) and on Aug. 27 (with Pate and saxophonist **CHICO FREEMAN**). Pianist **KENNY BARRON** starts an engagement on Aug. 28, with bassist **DAVE WILLIAMS** and drummer **BEN RILEY** in attendance. First set at nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave. at 10th St. (982-3260)—Pretty much everything about this jazz room is nice: the long rows of tables covered with pink linen, the bijou bandstand, the view from the bar of the bandstand, and the view out the window of Vaux & Withers' gabled Victorian courthouse. **OLIVER LAKE,** a founding member of the World Saxophone Quartet, leads a foursome Aug. 22-27; saxophonist **DAVID (FATHEAD) NEWMAN** works out with his quintet beginning Aug. 29. Music from nine-thirty.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—This room, which caters to thrash-metal buffs and cooler heads on weeknights, opens its doors on Sundays to swing-music fans, most of whom come to Lindy. Feet jitter, skirts twirl, and smiles break out everywhere. The New York Swing Dance Society organizes these gatherings, and on Aug. 27, as part of the Hennessy Village Jazz Festival, it brings in **VINCE GIORDANO & THE NIGHTHAWKS.** Giordano recreates the look and sound of a thirties swing outfit, with period instruments, an old-time crooner's mike, and arrangements faithful to the original scores. Music from eight.

Continental Divide, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, punks, posers, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. The motif is prehistoric punk—there's a Stone Age mural, assorted toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls, and a bartender who, on a recent evening, was sporting a T-shirt that read "Die, Yuppie Scum." Aug. 22, the Ghetto Dogs and ex-Dead Boy Cheetah Chrome; Aug. 23, Crimes of Passion; Aug. 27, the Gibson Girls; Aug. 29, Aarrrgh; and Aug. 30, Carry Nation and Frozen Concentrate. Mondays belong to the Waldos, Thursdays to the False Prophets, and Fridays to ex-Doll Sylvain Sylvain. Shows tend to get started at around ten. Dining.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A tin-roofed, hubcap-awninged, soul-food-serving chicken-shack theme bar. Exhibits include a rusted Orange Crush sign, a Pat Boone record jacket, bottle caps spelling out "Welcome," and other peckerwood flotsam. (If this place weren't a restaurant, it could be a flea market.) The clientele is mainly Northern urban. There's live music most nights, including gospel on Mondays, R. & B. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and zydeco with **LOUP GAROU** on Thursdays. Shows after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through a heavy-duty steel door, through a green Plexiglas door, down a long, narrow, fun-house passageway (mirrors in which you can watch yourself multiply; corrugated-metal siding you can riffle), and down a flight of stairs, you'll find this velvet-and-mirror-walled *boîte.* A quintet under the influence of the aggressive tenor-sax player **GEORGE COLEMAN** holds sway Aug. 22-27; pianist **HORACE SILVER** gets under way with a quintet of his own on Aug. 29. Mondays are set aside for guitarist **LES PAUL,** who was known as Rhubarb Red back in the twenties and thirties, when he was an itinerant country picker. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—The kind of classy place where no sooner do they give you a plate than they take it away. Fortune Garden is decorated for a greenhouse effect, and the priorities here are Chinese food, hanging plants, and jazz. Pianist **HAL GALPER** gets down to business Aug. 22-27; **JANE HARVEY,** a singer who can't seem to get Sondheim out of her head, will be here Aug. 28, with the able accompaniment of **BILL MAYS** (piano) and **JAY LEONHART** (bass). Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

Indigo Blues, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A modernist night spot in the basement of the Hotel Edison. There's a glass-brick reception area, an oval blond wood bar, and other interior-design novelties. The lighting—blue neon, in laserlike strips and wide halos—works on the eyes like a long day in front of the PC. Pianist **MC COY TYNER'S** big band goes to work Aug. 24-27. Music after nine.

Jan Wallman's, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A cozy room for singers and their followers, cheek by jowl with the Iroquois Hotel. **NANCY HARROW,** a pop-jazz vocalist known to segue from Irving Berlin to the Eagles, will be here Aug. 23; singer **BARBARA LEA** performs on Aug. 26, with some help from house pianist **WES MC AFEE.** Shows at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This upstairs music and performance space opened its doors in 1986 and quickly established itself as the headquarters of the downtown music scene. (There wasn't much competition.) In the rear, there's a mini-bar stocked with herbal tea and imported beer; up front is a small stage, occupied by Rage to Live on Aug. 21. The rest of the schedule: Aug. 22, When People Were Shorter and Lived by the Water; Aug. 23, Miracle Room; Aug. 24, Zahar; and Aug. 25-26, **ARTO LINDSAY.** (Closed Aug. 27-30). Music after nine.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home, but the smell of the nearby Maxwell House factory may give them a bit of a boost. Aug. 25 will be dedicated to artists from BAR/NONE Records, a you-gotta-give-'em-credit Hoboken outfit. The label handles what it refers to as "songs with the potential to be popular if only we could get them in your face," and has carried They Might Be Giants, Luka Bloom, and the Ordinaires, among others. The **CUCUMBERS** perform on Aug. 26.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Henry VIII and a unicorn on the walls, well-

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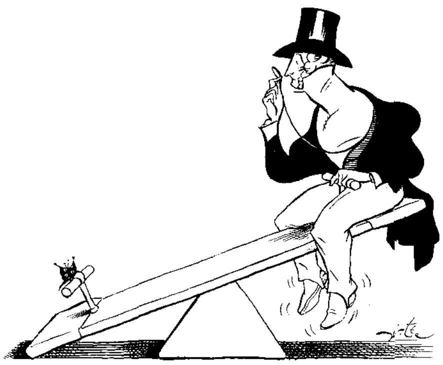
MOMMIE GREATEST

Did your mother hang out with Anna Magnani? Does Shelley Winters think that your mother could have been a great writer—that she was a combination of the Marx Brothers and Jean Genet? Did your mother ever get sawed in half by Orson Welles? Did she ever hide a gun in her lingerie for Rómulo Betancourt while working as a governess in Caracas? Did she teach Arthur Murray to dance? No? Well, then your mother clearly isn't Deborah Matlovsky's mother, and since you're not Deborah Matlovsky you couldn't have made "Whatever Happened to Zworl Quern?," a half-hour-long documentary portrait of one helluva glorious conundrum whose real name is Janet Wolfe. This is a woman who has spent a lifetime doing daring deeds, all in the name of love. Zworl Quern is the imaginary stage name given to Wolfe in childhood by an older brother who also invented a good word—"glamph"—for the sensation of peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth. Matlovsky's film is the second half of the double bill to be aired on PBS's "P.O.V." series this Thursday at 9 P.M. *(Channel 13). Those who need some lighter fare before so daunting a dose of the maternal can relax for the duration of "No Applause, Just Throw Money," a nice touristic inventory of a hundred and one New York City street performers—some of the most motherless-seeming people around.*



NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

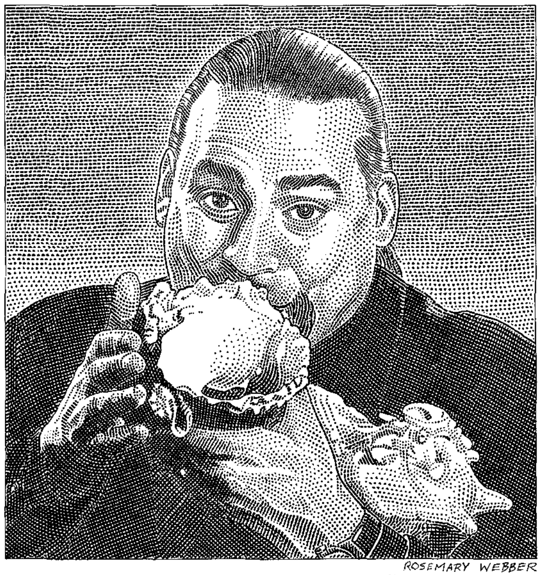
heeled cats on the banquettes, and **FRANK GORSHIN** on the bandstand. Gorshin, who played the Riddler on the "Batman" TV series, is doing impressions here—including one of Jack Nicholson. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This rock establishment, which recently moved from the East Village to the former temple of excess Studio 54, is still a place where the customer is not always right. The signature feature of the previous address, the giant Big Brother video screen, has been preserved intact. Upstairs in the balcony, there are designated seating areas for industry and non-industry people. Aug. 25 is the property of the **HOODOO GURUS,** an Australian band that combines psychedelic pop and guitar bedlam. The pompadoured lounge singer, showman, and cutup **BUSTER POINDEXTER** swings into action on Aug. 26, with, of course, his **BANSHEES OF BLUE** in tow. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club—but not so crowded, as Yogi Berra said of another night spot, that nobody comes here anymore. **KENNY BURRELL**—a guitarist who has gone toe-to-toe with Dizzy Gillespie, John Coltrane, and Coleman Hawkins, to name a very few—joins flugelhornist **ART FARMER** here Aug. 22-27. Bassist **RON CARTER** brings in a quintet for the week beginning Aug. 29. Shows from ten. Dining.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—A thirty-three-year-old three-ring circus. The ringmaster, a bearded gentleman named Art D'Lugoff, sometimes employs a barker to steer traffic to his multiple entertainments. In the basement, on Mondays after nine, salsa bands play for dancing and listening. **ART FARMER** and **KENNY BURRELL** will stop by at four-thirty for pre-dinner sets Aug. 25-26, and saxophonist **GATO BARBIERI** will follow at a more reasonable hour. Upstairs, in the Terrace Bar, where business and conversation are often at boom level, **BUCK CLAYTON** leads his very fine big band in a free performance on Aug. 25 at four. On Aug. 29, the Village Gate will be deep in the throes of the Hennessy Jazz Festival—you can buy passes here and at Sweet Basil—with both levels up and running from nine until four-thirty in the morning. Among the many performers will be **STEVE TURRE,** a trombonist and shell-player whose taste runs from Duke Ellington to Stevie Wonder; the **MICROSCOPIC SEPTET;** the father-and-son seven-string-guitar team of **BUCKY** and **JOHN PIZZARELLI;** and guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI.**

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—One of the few places below the surface of New York that deserve landmark status. It's also one of the few places anywhere that have a notable (if that's the right word) light fixture—one that Charles Mingus K.O.'d while trying to reason with the late Max Gordon, and that Mr. Gordon, who was a preservationist as well as a businessman, decided to leave in Mingus-ized condition. Saxophonist **BOB MINTZER'S** big band claims Aug. 22-27; **ARTHUR BLYTHE,** another sax man, gets rolling on Aug. 29. Mondays are in the hands of the **MEL LEWIS** big band. Music after ten.



Steve Turre at the Village Gate

ZANZIBAR & GRILL, 550 Third Ave., at 36th St. (779-0606)—The logo that appears on glasses, napkins, and matchbooks here—a bongo-playing monkey in fez and shades—embodies this pleasant restaurant-bar's blend of Africana and yuppie cool. The eponymous island is evoked by live palms, Rousseau-style murals, and etched-glass jungle scenes; Murray Hill is evoked by everything else. Vibraphonist **DAVE SAMUELS,** whose résumé includes a stint with Spyro Gyra, takes charge Aug. 22-23. Dining.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

THE light turned green at the corner of Avenue C and 9th Street, but before we could shift our Toyota into second gear we were rear-ended by a Volkswagen van. Just what everyone wants to do at midnight—stand in front of a vacant lot in the East Village and exchange insurance data. Evidently the driver of the van didn't like the idea either, because he sped off. But he didn't know what great Gene Hackman fans we are.

The hit-and-run proved to be our chance to reënact the climactic car chase from "The French Connection." In pursuit of the other vehicle's license number, we raced after it down Avenue C, made some time with a two-wheeled turn onto 7th Street, and then charged through a red light so we could follow the van down Avenue B. We ran two more lights (except we looked both ways beforehand, a very un-Hackman thing to do), then made a right onto 5th Street, flooring our car and honking all the way to another right turn, up Avenue A, leaving a wake of cheering onlookers in our fumes. Finally, at Avenue A and 6th Street, we were able to read the van's New York State license plate just as the van cut off a cab.

We felt great. Then suddenly two policemen pointed guns at our heads and demanded that we get out of the car and deliver an explanation. "Didn't you see him?" we asked in our defense, shouting out the license number so hysterically as to be unintelligible. The police were willing to withdraw their guns but not their skepticism—until the same van appeared from behind, racing up Avenue A. The next chase included three cars, and was even more successful. It turned out that the van's driver had an expired license and was missing his registration. He failed a sobriety test. After handcuffing him and placing him in the back of the squad car, one of the policemen criticized us. "You know, what you did was wrong," he said. "Running red lights is a stupid thing to do." We were contrite and apologized. As we were about to promise safety first forever he asked, "You want a job? None of our cops can drive like that." If only Gene had been there.

ART

"LUSTERED IN GUBBIO" has a great, Rabelaisian ring to it, and those who visit the Met's summer show "Italian Majolica," in the Lehman Wing, are sure to associate this phrase forever with sybaritic delight. The exhibition as a whole offers a neatly telescoped history of late-Quattrocento and Cinquecento art, and includes a variety of extraordinary objects. There is a saltcellar, from Urbino, in the shape of a man astride a chamber pot with his head in a caldron; and a portable writing desk—a ceramic laptop of the late baroque world—whose figures of Apollo and the nine Muses could inspire any author to distraction. Many dishes made in Urbino during the first half of the sixteenth century were lustered in Gubbio by the workshop of Maestro Giorgio Andreoli, and they are practically paintings, really, of mythologies, allegories, portraits—all the fine-art genres. These dishes reflect Mannerist art of the same period, and disrupt the orderly ideals of the High Renaissance with their speedy, sketchy figures and their fanciful, attenuated style. Majolica painters do not have the luxury of time that painters on canvas do. For this reason, they can be especially good at anecdotal drama—scenes of transformation, for instance. The story of Actaeon being changed into a stag by the goddess Diana (she zapped him when he caught her skinny-dipping with her maidens) is more direct, and the young man more vividly hapless, as depicted on a plate painted by Francesco Xanto Avelli da Rovigo than in Corot's painting of it just one room away. To Corot, this subject was an opportunity to linger over flesh and rich forest foliage—the figure of Actaeon, at the edge of the picture, is little more than a blur. But da Rovigo sets his version of the tale in a piazza: Diana and the girls are bathing nude in a town fountain, and poor Actaeon's plight is redoubled. His stag's antlers are the huntress's trophy, and they make of him a public fool.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The name game has brought the museum an astonishing range of new displays in the last few years: in the Charlotte C. and John C. Weber Galleries of the Arts of Ancient China, for example, there is an exquisite and modest showcase for many of the museum's fine Chinese ceramics, bronzes, and jades, spanning the six millennia from the Neolithic Age through the T'ang dynasty. . . . ¶ The Henry R. Luce Center for the Study of American Art, located in the American Wing, displays the bulk of the Met's 14,000 American objects in glass storage cases with obsessive order. Sleek Frank Lloyd Wright tables sit near gloppy Victorian extravaganzas; dozens of Federal dining-room chairs are lined up in order of size; fanciful mirrors, painted Pennsylvania-German chests, scores of Tiffany vases, hundreds of colored bottles, and enough silver to serve the city amount to an encyclopedia of furnishings brought to life. . . . ¶ More like a bald pate than a planted penthouse, the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden, atop the Lila Acheson Wallace Wing of Twentieth Century Art, is ideal for the kind of nonobjective sculpture currently on display there, such as David Smith's "Becca" and Reuben Nakian's "Garden of the Gods I." From this unadorned treetop perch the enormousness of the museum drops away and what remains is a spectacular panoramic vista of Central Parks West and South, and Fifth Avenue. . . . ¶ A strong dose of three decades of Lucas Samaras's work on paper is currently on view in the Berggruen Klee Gallery, in the Wallace Wing, and it offers a fresh take on an underexamined branch of the artist's output. The collection—which was donated to the museum by Samaras's dealer and his wife—leaves one wanting to see more of the artist's prescient use of photography for drawing and collaging and his gothic expressions of sexuality. . . . ¶ An exhibition comparing photographs of the sixties with photographs of the eighties, including works by Duane Michals, Cindy Sherman, and the Starn Twins. Through Oct. 8. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

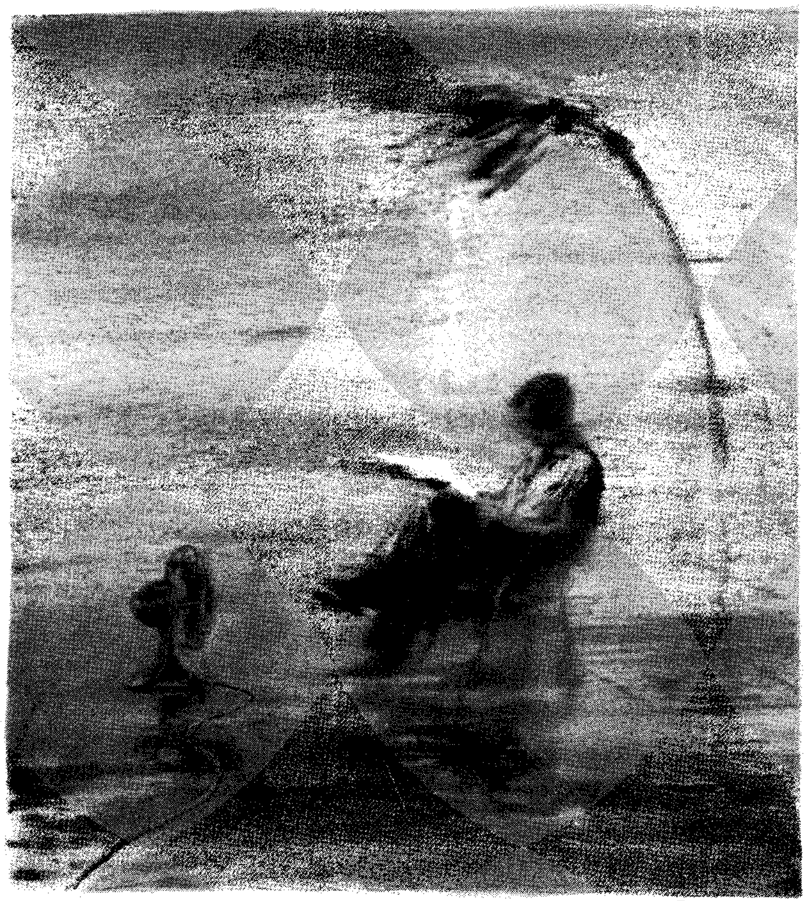
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—An installation by Matt Mullican of computer-based works. Starts Aug. 24. . . . ¶ A show of Cubist prints. . . . ¶ Photographs by Aaron Siskind from the permanent collection. Through Oct. 10. . . . **note:** The museum's sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., will be open, free, on Friday and Saturday, Aug. 25-26, from 6 to 10, with musicians from the Juilliard School performing at 7:30. (The museum is open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The current installation from the permanent collection emphasizes the museum's superb, specialized holdings in nonobjective European art. . . . ¶ Also on display from the collection is an enormous circle of red-slate fragments, assembled by the peripatetic English artist Richard Long—a poetic sort of walker. Long, who has a way of making atavistic practices speak to us in sophisticated terms, recently installed four other pieces—including two with text, and another made with his handprints. Through Sept. 3. (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A show of oils, watercolors, prints, and drawings by Edward Hopper. The hundred and fifty works span the artist's career, and are drawn from the museum's collection. . . . ¶ "Art in Place" is a thematically arranged show of three hundred works that have entered the permanent collection over the past fifteen years. They range from a 1901 watercolor by Maurice Prendergast to a 1988 aluminum sculpture by John Newman. Through Oct. 15. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Whitney Museum Downtown, 33 Maiden Lane—"The Desire of the Museum": This provocative show, organized by student curators, presents the institution of "the museum" as a living entity, with its own set of desires and unspoken agendas. It does not include some of the better-known artistic examinations of the museum frame, by such artists as Claes Oldenburg, Marcel Broodthaers, and Michael Asher. It does feature a Marcel Duchamp piece, which contains reproductions of the master gamesman's ready-mades; Richard Artschwager's hairy rubber blips, which are strategically installed in unexpected locations; Hans Haacke's portrait of the extra-aesthetic life of Seurat's "Les Poseuses"; and Mark Dion and Jason Simon's tales of pictures that were badly damaged or painted and then economically revitalized through conservationist cunning. The curators try to push their point too far with gimmicky interventions (including die-cut questions beside the art works, such as "What does the museum want?"), but this show—which also includes Guerrilla Girls' posters, Allan McCollum's painted surrogates, Louise Lawler's photo wall labels, and more—is long overdue. Through Sept. 12. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures." Through Sept. 18. . . . ¶ "Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters & Sculptors." . . . Concurrent with the show of Hispanic art is a forceful lobby installation by Alfredo Jaar, a Chilean artist living in New York. It consists of light boxes that look like black beams edged in photographic transparencies of United States civil-rights protesters, including picketers carrying signs that read "I *AM* A MAN" and a young black man with part of his face done up in white makeup. The artfully haphazard arrangement of beams argues effectively for anti-authoritarianism in both life and art. Through Sept. 4. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)



Self-portrait by Mark Tansey

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A display of Saudi Arabian dress in which traditional *thawbs*, for instance, are seen alongside a cloak that belonged to King Faisal. Through Oct. 29. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Rain of Talent: Umbrella Art": A mild drizzle of some thirty altered umbrellas suspended from the ceiling of the main stairwell. The talents include Rhonda Zwillinger, Kim MacConnel, Robert Venturi, Betty Woodman, and Rodney Alan Greenblat. Through Sept. 24. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—The most recent installation of works from the exemplary collection of John D. Rockefeller 3rd (the society's initial benefactor) highlights fine Chinese and Japanese porcelains, such as a grouping of small translucent celadon bowls and a large Ming water jar depicting fish swimming among aquatic plants. There are also Hindu and Buddhist sculptures, mostly from India, and particularly enthralling are several Khmer stone statues, with their idealized naturalism, classically smooth surfaces, and utterly placid serenity masking what was a brutal warrior society. . . . ¶ A display of thirty-five Korean porcelains provides a good, if somewhat cursory, introduction to delicate work made during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910). Both shows through Sept. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—Red Grooms' work is about as close as art gets to real entertainment, and his graphic work—the subject of this show—is no exception. Included are some delightful lithographs that resemble pop-up books. Through Sept. 10. . . . ¶ Sculptor Mierle Laderman Ukeles is showing works made with crushed soda cans, pulped Christmas trees, and shredded Wella Balsam containers. Through Sept. 4. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Views of Rome—drawings of the eternal city in its semi-rustic, pre-Fellini state—from the Thomas Ashby collection at the Vatican Library. Most are from the seventeenth or eighteenth century. A quality yawn. Through Oct. 29. . . . ¶ "Polished Perfection: The Art of Turned-Wood Bowls." In the nineteen-thirties and forties, almost as an afterthought to the Industrial Revolution, factory mass production displaced the artisan and his lathe in the creation of wood bowls. This show, of eighty works by twenty-one contemporary North American craftsmen (along with four bowls by four unknown Early American settlers), proves that the artisanal tradition has survived. Through Oct. 1. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Exodus and Exile: 2,000 Years in Ancient Israel," an archeological exhibition tracing some of the cultural shifts and political cataclysms between 1200 B.C.E. and 600 C.E. that, bit by bit, transformed the Israelite kingdom into an international religious community—the birth, in short, of Jewish identity in the modern sense. A few objects, such as ancient mosaics and synagogue reliefs, have not been seen in this country before, and while they represent a fragmented and elusive story the show's attractive, playful installation is informative. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Stitched from the Soul: Slave Textiles from the Ante-Bellum South." This fascinating exhibition demonstrates that slaves preserved fragments of their African heritage in their quilts by combining native patterns, colors, and appliqué techniques with requisite Euro-American motifs. This display of quilts is double-edged: the most delicate ones were made by slaves for their mistresses, with whom they were often drawn into close and complicated relationships, while quiltmaking by slaves for their own use formed a fulcrum of their social life. Through Sept. 17. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—An exhibition of botanical illustrations, mostly English and Victorian. Through Sept. 2. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily,

ART—Cont'd

except Sundays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ The Berg Collection has mounted a presentation of letters, books, and manuscripts in which poets and novelists from Chaucer to Bellow ruminate on love and death. (Berg Collection Exhibition Room. Open daily, except Thursdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Road, Long Island City—Noguchi, one of the twentieth century's singular talents, designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his sculptures. It contains a wide range of his work—from the early surrealistic biomorphic pieces through several types of stone carvings—and documentation of his prodigious public art. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful ivy-walled garden dotted with sculptures. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—This first retrospective of the well-regarded African-American painter Hughie Lee-Smith includes some moving and unusual portraits of isolation, made in the fifties, that call to mind Marsh, Tooker, and the early Guston, and sixties works depicting isolated figures next to metal poles with colored ribbons flapping from them. In the seventies and eighties, the subtle surrealist cast fades and a relatively ordinary urban realism remains. . . . ¶ Graphics and installations that incorporate photography, the work of fifteen contemporary artists. Both shows through Sept. 24. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Jene Highstein / Mike Glier—Highstein's art is rooted in the situational sculpture of the early seventies, but in this show at Wave Hill, an ideally sited indoor-outdoor display of work from the past five years, the artist's interest in traditional sculpture-making predominates. Large masses of marble have been chiselled, chinked, bored, and pounded, and tree trunks have been stripped, smoothed, and bleached into sturdy abstract forms that suggest toadstools, a beached whale, and Rodin's "Balzac." Sometimes the artist's debt to Noguchi is too strong, but Highstein can also fashion an awkward, chunky shape into a breathing entity that transcends its material. Through Oct. 8. / Glier's drawings, in what was once a formal dining room, establish the artist as today's great baroque wall decorator. His luscious, moody landscapes—in bravura gray washes that have the brooding mystery of the German Romantics—evoke the postcultural miasma of J. G. Ballard's novels and infuse the scenes with the artist's own sense of dark peacefulness. Through Dec. 31. (Wave Hill, Independence Ave. at 249th St., the Bronx. Closed Mondays.)

"China—June 4, 1989 . . ."—The Asian American Arts Centre has responded to the brutal military force used against protesting students in Tiananmen Square with a video program of television news documentaries in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin; an exhibition of vivid photographs of the student hunger strike and subsequent violence; and an evolving "Artist Wall," a folding screen that is being made from doors and decorated by interested artists. The most compelling work on it looks like a metal prison door with a map of China behind a barred window. Through Sept. 29. (26 Bowery.)

"Literacy on the Table"—An admirably integrated exhibition of primarily multi-media works that address cultural literacy in relation to "otherness." In "See Me Jump," Clarissa T. Sligh rewrites Dick and Jane from a black perspective, and Edgar Heap of Birds, in a series of drawings, emblazons his Native American identity with such words as Tribe Upon Back. Through Aug. 26. (Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St. Closed Mondays.)

Group Shows—At the **forum,** 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.: Contemporary realist paintings are combined with a few gems of early American modernism, particularly by Max Weber, one of the New York Cubists. One of his paintings, "Suspense," depicts Cubistic figures pushed to the front of a dark and ordinary room; they lie about, as if waiting for Godot. Through Aug. 25. . . . **hanson,** 415 West Broadway: It's worth muddling past the anemic independent-curator art here for Dean McNeil's post-minimal concrete sculptures, which look like early Joel Shapiros but which actually contain small electronic gadgets (a Sony Watchman, a Canon Typestar) and wittily express a wish to entomb the consumerist preoccupation of much of today's more celebrated contemporary art; and for some funny and disturbing abstract paintings by Charles Clough. Through Sept. 1. . . . **herstand,** 24 W. 57th St.: This hodgepodge of twentieth-century sculptures (with one from the late nineteenth century) seems to lack a historical point. But it does include some stunning bronzes, particularly an animated Rosso bust of a laughing child, a proto-Cubist 1906 Picasso nude, and Brancusi's recumbent head of a sleeping child (1908). The postwar sculptures are not as well selected, but include some wonderfully theatrical bronzes by the contemporary artist Ann McCoy, such as a bed on a winged Etruscoid barge, and a dreamy grouping that includes a classical altar, a strongbox draped with a lily, and some mystical-looking abaci. Through Oct. 14. . . . **knoedler,** 19 E. 70th St.: Suffocating, perfumed elegance by such artists as Motherwell, Stella, Rauschenberg, and Heizer is, sadly, in great abundance here. Through Sept. 11. . . . **marcus,** 578 Broadway: This show of gallery artists displays parallel preferences: a cool and poetic strain of narrative paintings that contain obscured commentaries about modernist image-making, most successfully embodied in the work of Mark Tansey, and a less compelling variety of restrained, handwrought sculptures, most of them with slight sexual allusions—with the exception of the work of Not Vital, a Swiss artist whose sculpture is warm and expansive. Through Aug. 25. . . . **marlborough,** 40 W. 57th St.: A big sampler of mostly gallery artists, many represented by work with a summer theme. Of these, Larry Rivers' two portraits—of a jazz musician naked in his hot hotel room, and of a woman in shorts lolling languorously on a porch—make the best, sultriest point. Through Sept. 16. . . . **pace,** 32 E. 57th St.: "Sculpture by Painters," many of whom are gallery artists, including Condo, de Kooning, Dine, Dubuffet, Johns, Kelly, Lichtenstein, Miró, Morley, Newman, Picasso, Schnabel, Twombly, and Warhol. Condo, who is new to the medium, makes an auspicious début in this handsome exhibition. Through Sept. 1. . . . **washburn,** 41 E. 57th St.: The fiftieth anniversary of the New York World's Fair is celebrated with a group of American paintings made circa 1939. The show is dominated by geometric and biomorphic abstractions that owe a great deal to Europe. Much of the work is attractive and thoughtful, often dryly so. Included are an interesting David Smith painting and a huge canvas of a W.P.A. mural by Ilya Bolotowsky, which demonstrates Klee-like whimsy on a grand scale. There's also an appealing Alice Trumbull Mason, which has a little brushy fire that suggests the more assertive America soon to come. Through Aug. 31. . . . **weber,** 142 Greene St.: Members of what we are meant to see as two generations of conceptual artists are united in this summer gathering. The oldies take the cake: Sol LeWitt's white box structure (entitled "332 (8 Parts)") from the seventies, Daniel Buren's "A Frame in a Frame in a Frame for a Frame"—a site-specific wall piece of asymmetrically arranged yellow beach-awning stripes against a slate-colored wall—and Hamish Fulton's framed photographs of wildernesses where he walked, are very elegant works, each quite coolly sublime in its way. Works in mixed media by Franz Erhard Walther, Wallace & Donohue, Massimo Antonaci, and Magdalena Jetelová—the younger guard—look pretty good, too, but a little gimmicky and unfocussed by comparison. Also, in the small gallery there are several beautiful prints by Robert Ryman, theologist of colors white, which date from 1969 to 1975. Through Aug. 25. . . . **york,** 21 E. 65th St.: The main room is given over to stiff and provincial American landscape and figurative paintings of the nineteenth century, but the entranceway is devoted to work, from the early twentieth century, that displays a more engaged idea of culture: an ink sketch of New York by Stuart Davis, a watercolor of a house in the snow by Charles Burchfield, a painting of a lively urban crowd by Guy Pène du Bois, a brooding still-life by Marsden Hartley, and a composition of interlocking trapezoids by Charles Shaw. Through Sept. 1.

Sophie Calle

PHOTOGRAPHY

WITH everything else that's being recycled from the fifties, existentialism is having its comeback, too, as is clear in a show called "Culture Medium," at the International Center of Photography. But eighties existentialism goes even further than the alienated figures of Giacometti, Beckett, and Ionesco. Each of the six artists showing work is a kind of detective on the case of the image. Sarah Charlesworth's mesmerizing piece concentrates on the misleading role of a newspaper photograph that was published worldwide when the Red Brigade kidnapped Aldo Moro. Donigan Cumming's room includes recordings and photographs of fans who imitate Elvis and claim they've spoken to him postmortem. (Cumming also displays a long letter written to Elvis after his pelvis stopped moving.)

Clearly, the identity crisis that existentialism was all about has expanded from people to images of people. Sophie Calle's installation ("The Detective") embodies this double identity crisis. Calle asked her mother to hire a detective, who was to follow her and thereby provide photographic proof of her existence. Her piece includes snapshots that the detective took, plus two written records (hers and his) tracing where she went and what and whom she saw. There are telling differences between the texts, but the biggest split comes at the end. The detective has Calle leaving a movie house about an hour and a half after she claims she left. He says she arrived home at eight o'clock; that sounds goody-goody, but her description of what she did might make a mother less happy. According to Calle, she never went home—her night ended at a hotel. Now it's the viewer's turn to be a private eye. Who's right? The detective is supposed to be a professional. Calle loses credibility at the start because she describes herself as wearing two pairs of shoes. But people do funny things, and common sense says she knows where she was. So much for Calle's attempt to make sure she exists. Looking at her engaging work gave us an idea: pinching oneself has always been a fast way to make sure one is real; maybe we should start squeezing images.

Sidney D. Gamble (1890-1968)—A small selection of photographs from the thousands that the artist shot in China between 1917 and 1932. Gamble, also a sociologist, spent many years in China trying to understand it, writing about it, and taking pictures. This exhibition shows an observer who was interested in capturing both tradition and change. Through Sept. 9. (China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—A mostly photographic show by six artists—Sophie Calle, Sarah Charlesworth, Donigan Cumming, Dieter Froese, Allan McCollum, and Angela Neuke. Through Sept. 3. (Tuesdays, noon to 8; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

"Shadows and Silhouettes"—Although shadows can dominate a photographer's mood, they are rarely given the kind of attention that light gets, so its good to see pictures that are organized around them. The images on display here skip around the century; there are classics as well as lesser-known photographs; and altogether they make for a worthwhile little show that's more psychologically rich than formally inventive. Through Aug. 31. (Seagram Building, fourth floor, 375 Park Ave., at 52nd St.)

"The Nature of New York City"—An array of photo opportunities that should have been missed. A number of the pictures feature weeds that are supposed to be touching but that need to be pulled. Through Sept. 30. (American Museum of Natural History.)

"Invention and Continuity in Contemporary Photographs"—The title promises more than what you actually get with this show. What's on display is a small selection of work, some of it strong and some as unsubtle as the curatorial method that has systematized the images into three obvious categories. Through Oct. 8. (Metropolitan Museum.)

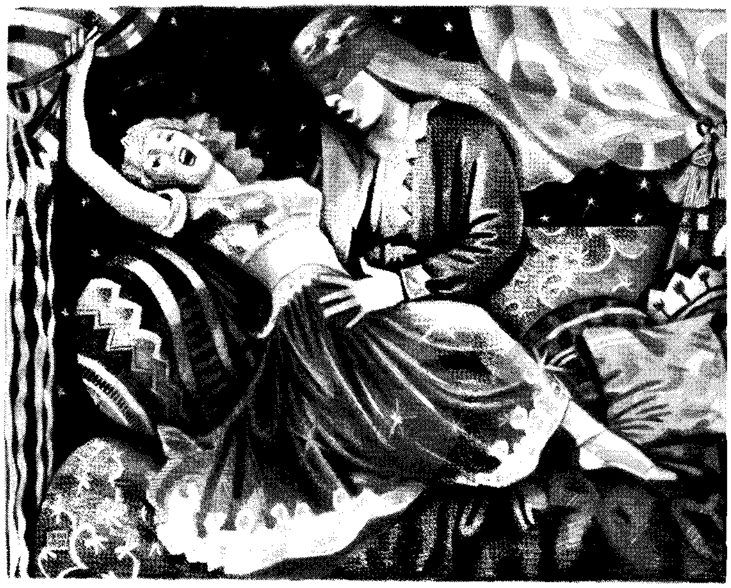
Short List—robert sheehan, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through Aug. 25); **aaron siskind,** Museum of Modern Art (through Oct. 10); **todd watts,** P.P.O.W. 532 Broadway (through Aug. 31; closed Mondays).

MUSIC

THE closing week of Mostly Mozart concerts brings only one interesting repertoire of choice but several potential charms in execution of the familiar. The novelty (only mildly interesting, we confess) is Mozart's "Davidde Penitente," an oratorio in Italian-opera style and, somewhat unusually, in the Italian tongue. (Latin was the customary though not invariable language of oratorio in Italy.) The work comes up August 22 and 23, with Patricia Schuman and Frank Lopardo as soloists in the florid bravura airs. The program also offers the violin prodigy who plays under the single name Midori, in the fourth of Mozart's overplayed violin concertos.

The following evening is a Mozart-Beethoven-Schubert program of chamber music. Avery Fisher Hall is not the right chamber for it, of course, but if you sit forward and listen imaginatively the concert may well be worth the effort. The players are Stanley Ritchie, Anner Bylsma, Malcolm Bilson, David Miller, and Michael Willens—all specialists in what we call "original" or "period" or "authentic" instruments. None of those terms are quite right, but no one has come up with a concise and generally accepted expression for instruments restored or constructed to the specifications prevailing around the time the music at hand was composed. "Apt instruments" has been proposed; that tilts toward the realm of advocacy, but we find it valid.

At any rate, apt instruments can sometimes be more revealing in a work for single strings than in orchestral music. Some of the same players gave Schubert's frequently heard "Trout" Quintet (which is also on the August 24 program) in the more suitable chamber of Merkin Concert Hall a couple of seasons ago, and we recall a particular delight at hearing its symphonic developments rendered without the clash and roar of metallic timbres that often arise from the tightly strung, heavily bowed, intensively vibrated metal strings of "modern instrument" ensembles. The performance was exciting and vigorous but at the same time as limpid as the *helle Bächlein* in the song from which the quintet takes its name and one of its tunes.



"The Desert Song," from the New York City Opera

IN TOWN

New York City Opera—Presenting **la bohème,** with Renée Fleming, Gail Dobish, Jon Garrison, Thomas Woodman, Stanley Wexler, and Jan Opalach; conducted by Chris Nance. (Aug. 22 at 8 and Aug. 27 at 1.) . . . **mefistofele,** with Frances Ginsberg, John Cheek, and Robert Grayson; conducted by Sergiu Comissiona. (Aug. 23 at 8.) . . . **anna bolena,** with Marilyn Mims, Mimi Lerner, Jane Bunnell, Paul Hartfield, and Harry Dworchak; Scott Bergeson. (Aug. 24 at 8.) . . . **don giovanni,** with Nova Thomas, Margaret Cusack, Kenneth Shaw, and Paul Austin Kelly; Sergiu Comissiona. (Aug. 25 at 8.) . . . **carmen,** with Wendy White, MiHae Park, John Absalom, and William Parcher; Hal France. (Aug. 26 at 2.) . . . **il barbiere di siviglia,** with Patricia Spence, Rebecca Russell, Ron Peo, and Michael Cousins; Sergiu Comissiona. (Aug. 26 at 8.) . . . **the desert song,** with alternating casts in the first two of seven consecutive performances; James Allen Gahres. (Aug. 29-30 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Mostly Mozart Festival—Final performances—Aug. 21: The Beaux Arts Trio. . . . ¶ Aug. 22-23: Gerard Schwarz conducting the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra and Chorus in an all-Mozart evening, with Midori, violin; Patricia Schuman, soprano; and Frank Lopardo, tenor. . . . ¶ Aug. 24: A Beethoven-Schubert-Mozart program, with period instruments. . . . ¶ Aug. 25-26: The festival orchestra, conducted by Gerard Schwarz, in an all-Mozart program. With Walter Klien, piano, and Dawn Upshaw, soprano. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Evenings at 8.)

Opera at the Academy—Presenting its version of Henry Purcell's opera "Dido and Aeneas." (419 Lafayette St. 677-8960. Aug. 21-22 and Aug. 24 at 9, and Aug. 23 at 8:30 and 10:30.)

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—Final concerts of the season—Aug. 23 at 2:30: The annual "Tanglewood on Parade" program, including offerings by resident student musicians and a concert (8:30 P.M.) by the Boston Symphony and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, conducted by Leonard Bernstein and John Williams. . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 8:30: The Beaux Arts Trio. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 8: Emanuel Ax and Yo-Yo Ma performing the complete Beethoven sonatas and variations for piano and cello. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 8:30: The Boston Symphony, conducted by Carl St. Clair, with Earl Wild, piano. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 2:30: Leonard Bernstein conducting the orchestra in compositions by Copland and Shostakovich. (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

Saratoga Performing Arts Center—The **philadelphia orchestra** in final performances of the season here—Aug. 23: William Smith conducting works by Persichetti, Mozart, Delius, and Stravinsky. With Stephen Hough, piano. . . . ¶ Aug. 24: Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducting a Beethoven, Dvořák, and Brahms program. With Garrick Ohlsson, piano. . . . ¶ Aug. 25: David Zinman conducting, with Jessye Norman, soprano. . . . ¶ Aug. 26: David Zinman conducting a Beethoven-Strauss program, with Isaac Stern, violin. (Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 1-518 587-3330. Evenings at 8:15.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK / PERSONAL APPEARANCES

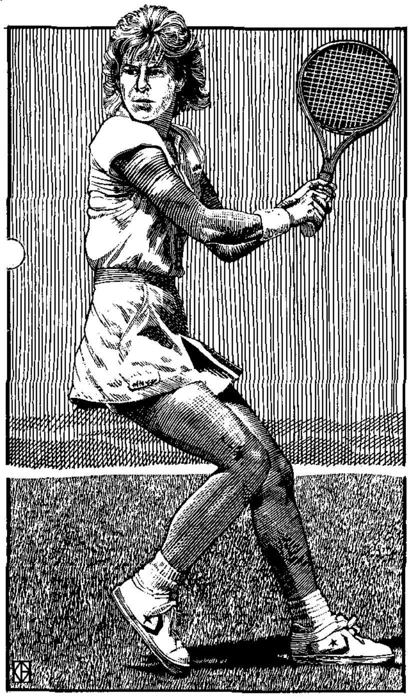
Bonnie Raitt—Now middle-aged, Raitt is back with songs about babies and aging parents, but she's still the baddest good white girl ever. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Aug. 23 at 8.)

Wilson Pickett—"Wilson Pickett's Greatest Hits" would have a priority berth on any good-will space probe we were in charge of sending to the far reaches of the universe. The soul hits he recorded at Stax and Muscles Shoal studios in the mid-sixties are among humankind's happiest creations, and they continue to sound brand new. With Percy Sledge, Eddie Floyd, and Junior Walker. (Beacon Theatre. Aug. 25 at 8 and midnight.)

Jefferson Airplane—Like a convergence of heavenly bodies or perhaps a plague of locusts, swarms of rock stars in their mid-to-late forties seem to have obeyed some instinctive urge by drying out, consulting with their accountants, and darkening the skies over America in ghastly unison this summer. In a career move that was probably not based on a psychedelic revelation, five of the six original members of this agitprop Aquarian rock band have reunited and joined that voracious cloud, throwing oldies shadows on our eyes, leaving us helpless, helpless, helpless. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Aug. 29-30 at 8.)

Peabo Bryson—Beacon Theatre. Aug. 26 at 8 and midnight.

Elvis Costello—Appearing solo and with his band, the Rude 5. (Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. 473-7171. Aug. 27 at 8.)



Chris Evert

SPORTS

THE United States Open tennis tournament has always been one of the sweeter consolations of end-of-summer life in New York. As the business of September threatens your leisure, the Open lets you capture one last summer afternoon, sitting in the warm, fading sun. That's if you can get in, of course. The Open is August's toughest ticket in town. All seats are hard to get, and those for the semifinals and finals are bought up in advance by corporations and subscribers. So if you'd like to go to the late rounds but are unwilling to pay scalper rates (currently two hundred and fifty dollars for inferior seats), and wouldn't be happy trying your luck in a cancellation line on the morning of the matches (a few people get in this way), then you might do well to head straight over to the National Tennis Center, in Flushing Meadow. Don't bother calling. (You won't get anywhere over the phone.) Just go to the box office and ask about obstructed-view tickets. The fact is that such seats are *available*—about a hundred for each "sold out" session—but there's an etiquette to getting them: you have to seem to want them badly enough, but not too badly. You have to make the right impression.

Last summer, when we were working in the neighborhood of Flushing Meadow, we dropped by to ask about tickets so often that we got taken for a scalper. We'd only been following instructions: in June, we'd been told to come back in July, and in July, August. Finally, the box-office manager looked at us askance, sold us two seats under the press box under the roof, and asked us not to come back anymore. We asked a pleasant, grandfather-like man in the parking lot to help us, explaining that our youthful enthusiasm had been misinterpreted as enterprise. He took our money and came back with four better seats, right behind the TV cameras.

Moral: Be unassuming and matter-of-fact, firm but plausible. Or bring along a grandfather.

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the San Francisco Giants, Aug. 21-22 at 7:35, and Aug. 23 at 1:35.

Yankees—Vs. the Boston Red Sox, Aug. 21-23 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Baltimore Orioles, Aug. 24 at 4:30 (a twi-night doubleheader), Aug. 25 at 7:30, Aug. 26 at 2:15, and Aug. 27 at 1:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Oakland A's, Aug. 28-30 at 7:30.

Giants/Jets—The rivals kick off their annual exhibition game Aug. 26 at 8. For these preseason showdowns, the blue shirts are always designated "at home." (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands.)

(Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000. For Meadowlands tickets, call 307-7171.)

RACING

Horses—At Saratoga Springs: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1:30. The Hopeful is on Aug. 26, and the Spinaway is on Aug. 28. Through Aug. 28. . . . At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays at 1:30. The Iselin Handicap is on Aug. 26. Through Sept. 2. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Mondays through Saturdays at 7:45.

CHAMPIONSHIPS—TENNIS

United States Open—U.S.T.A. National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadow. Aug. 28-29 at 11, and Aug. 30 at 11 and 7:35. 1-718 271-5100. Through Sept. 10.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Water Music—The inside of the barge that floats in the shadow of the Brooklyn side of the Brooklyn Bridge, and that is the site of twice-a-week chamber-music concerts, looks a lot like your eccentric grandmother's summer home. The walls are panelled, parquet style, with cherry wood taken from the decks of an old Staten Island Ferry; the floors are made from the same ferry's benches. Foam cushions on folding chairs are covered with a faded, floral material; subscription-holders, dressed in sundresses or shorts, find their seats labelled with Magic Marker on pieces of masking tape. Like a beach house, the room smells damp and salty. Even stranger than finding this familiar, small-town environment in New York is the fact that, as you sit listening to Beethoven string quartets, you and the musicians move—really sway—along with the waves in the East River. When the concert is over, it takes a little while to get your land legs back. Bargemusic presents these high-calibre chamber-music concerts year-round—they're like a vacation from Alice Tully Hall. For information about tickets, call 1-718 624-4061.

Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors—Final performances of the season. Aug. 22 at 7: The Amherst Saxophone Quartet. . . . At 8:15: Scat dancing, and music, with Larry Ridley and the Jazz Legacy Ensemble, C. Scoby Stroman, Mickey Davidson, and Buster Brown. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 8:15: Tap dancing, and music, with Fred Strickler, Manhattan Tap, Charles (Cookie) Cook, Anita Feldman, Michele Hendricks, and Althea Waites. . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at noon: The Jim Pepper trio. . . . At 5:15: J Fregalette Jansen Dance. . . . At 8:15: A country dance party. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 5:15: Rumillajta. . . . At 6:45: Music from China. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at noon: Reverend Dan Smith. . . . At 1: Bob Brozman. . . . At 2: Drink Small. . . . At 3: Marcia Ball. . . . At 4: Moses Rascoe. . . . At 5: Fairfield Four. . . . At 6: Mighty Joe Young. . . . At 7:30: The Chambers Brothers. . . . At 9: Katie Webster. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at noon: The Hudson River Boys. . . . At 1: The Paton Family. . . . At 2: Priscilla Herdman. . . . At 3: Si Kahn. . . . At 4: The Bruce Daigrepont Cajun Band. . . . At 5: Townes Van Zandt. . . . At 6: Alison Krauss and Union Station. . . . At 7: Buskin and Batteau. . . . At 8: The Clancy Brothers, with Robbie O'Connell. (Lincoln Center. No tickets necessary.)

Don Henley—The former Eagles desperado has checked out of the Hotel California, doffed the Wild West outfit that an illiberal Cowboy President repossessed in the eighties, and taken up stylistic residence in a ruined, monochrome, production-designer's Heartland. His new album, "The End of the Innocence," is the latest thing in elegiac, sourpuss meditations on national decline; his concert should be a fashionable dress-black exercise in the tasting of ashes. Edie Brickell's loopy smile and the neo-hippie sunniness of her band, the New Bohemians, will incongruously kick off the evening's festivities. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 26 at 8. For tickets, call 1-516 221-1000.)

Ziggy Marley—In the eight years since the great Bob Marley died, the American audience for reggae has generally had to choose between the dark, heavyweight brand and a lighter-than-air lovers' rock. Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers are the leading exponents of a vigorous new pop interpretation of the loping Jamaican music, a judgment confirmed by the bubbling drive and melodic verve of their current album, "One Bright Day." The Melody Makers include Ziggy (Bob's eldest son, who is 20), Cedella (22), and Stephen (17) Marley, and their tight band is an Ethiopian unit named Dallol. New Orleans' finest, the sweet and soulful Neville Brothers, will open the concert. (Riverstage, Pier 84, Twelfth Ave. at 45th St. Aug. 24 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 757-3100. . . . ¶ Also at the Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 27 at 8.)

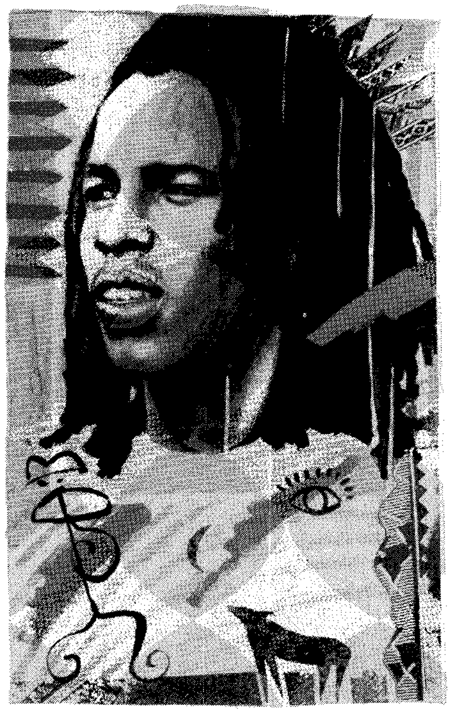
Prospect Park Band Shell—Aug. 22-24: Final performances of the Kings County Shakespeare Company's production of "Measure for Measure." . . . ¶ Aug. 25: Christine Lavin, with Bad Attitudes. . . . ¶ Aug. 26: Sister Carol, with Hattie Gossett. . . . ¶ Aug. 27: Deuce, with Myra Melford. (Evenings at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Central Park Band Shell—Aug. 25 at 8:30: Rumillatja, with Remy Charlip. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 3: Mitch Ryder. (Mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary. For rain-date information, call 860-1335.)

Autumn Crafts Festival—More than three hundred artisans, getting a jump on the fall season, will present their works for sale. Food, dancing, and music will round out the fair. (Lincoln Center. Aug. 26-27, 11 to 7.)

Riverside Park Rotunda—Aug. 26 at 4: Kimati Dinizulu and his African Dancers, Drummers, and Singers. . . . At 6: Lois Colin Chamber Ensemble. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 4: The Bopera House and Ms. Irene Reid and Company. (W. 79th St., near the Boat Basin. No tickets necessary.)

South Street Seaport—The Claude Bolling Big Band. (Pier 16, East River at Fulton St. Aug. 26 at 8. No tickets necessary.)



Ziggy Marley

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 17.

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"La Boca del Lobo" (1988, directed by Francisco J. Lombardi; a Peruvian film, in Spanish). Closed Mondays.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Abyss" (James Cameron), with Ed Harris, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Michael Biehn.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 22: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan. From Aug. 23: "Cookie" (Susan Seidelman), with Peter Falk, Emily Lloyd, Dianne Wiest, Michael V. Gazzo, Brenda Vaccaro, and Adrian Pasdar.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"The Abyss" (James Cameron), with Ed Harris, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Michael Biehn.

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
"Batman" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 29: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child" (Stephen Hopkins), with Robert Englund. From Aug. 30: "Shirley Valentine" (Lewis Gilbert), with Pauline Collins.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 24 "Let It Ride" (Joe Pytka), with Richard Dreyfuss, David Johansen, Teri Garr, and Allen Garfield. From Aug. 25: "The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy, Tommy Lee Jones, and John Heard.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Parenthood" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Abyss" (James Cameron), with Ed Harris, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Michael Biehn.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child" (Stephen Hopkins), with Robert Englund.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 24: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan. From Aug. 25: "Millennium" (Michael Anderson), with Kris Kristofferson and Cheryl Ladd.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Aug. 24: "Do the Right Thing" (†).
From Aug. 25: "Romero" (John Duigan), with Raul Julia.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Casualties of War" (†).
Theatre 2: "Parenthood" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 22: "Batman" (†). From Aug. 23: "Cookie" (Susan Seidelman), with Peter Falk, Emily Lloyd, Dianne Wiest, Michael V. Gazzo, Brenda Vaccaro, and Adrian Pasdar.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 22: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks. From Aug. 23: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 3: "Distant Voices, Still Lives" (Terence Davies), with Freda Dowie and Peter Postlethwaite.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Eddie and the Cruisers II: Eddie Lives" (Jean-Claude Lord), with Michael Paré and Matthew Laurance.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 24: "Lock Up" (John Flynn), with Sylvester Stallone, Donald Sutherland, John Amos, Darlanne Fluegel, and Sonny Landham. From Aug. 25: "Wired" (Larry Peerce), with Michael Chiklis.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 24: "Rude Awakening" (Aaron Russo and David Greenwalt), with Cheech Marin, Eric Roberts, Julie Hagerty, and Robert Carradine. From Aug. 25: "The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy, Tommy Lee Jones, and John Heard.
Theatre 2: "Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton, Carey Lowell, Robert Davi, Talisa Soto, and Anthony Zerbe.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Dead Poets Society" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
Through Aug. 29: "Let It Ride" (Joe Pytka), with Richard Dreyfuss, David Johansen, Teri Garr, and Allen Garfield.
From Aug. 30: "Shirley Valentine" (Lewis Gilbert), with Pauline Collins.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Parenthood" (†).

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "The Abyss" (James Cameron), with Ed Harris, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Michael Biehn.
Theatre 2: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child" (Stephen Hopkins), with Robert Englund.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Cheetah" (Jeff Blyth), with Keith Coogan; and (evenings only) "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks.
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I, 57 Watts St. (431-1590)
Through Aug. 22: "Machine Dreams" (directed by Peter Krieg; in English and German).
Aug. 23-29: "Cannibal Tours" (Dennis O'Rourke), a documentary.
Aug. 30: "The Mask of Fu Manchu" (1932, Charles Brabin and Charles Vidor), with Boris Karloff and Lewis Stone; and "Mad Love" (1935, Karl Freund), with Peter Lorre, Frances Drake, and Colin Clive.

Bleecker Street Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 22: "Mother Küsters Goes to Heaven" (1975, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German), with Brigitte Mira; and "The Third Generation" (1979, Fassbinder; in German), with Eddie Constantine and Hanna Schygulla. . . . ¶ Aug. 23-24: "In a Year of 13 Moons" (1978, Fassbinder; in German), with Volker Spengler. . . . ¶ Aug. 25-26: "The Merchant of Four Seasons" (1971, Fassbinder; in German), with Hans Hieschmuller. . . . ¶ Aug. 27-28: "Veronika Voss" (1982, Fassbinder; in German), with Rosel Zech; and "Despair" (1979, Fassbinder), with Dirk Bogarde and Andréa Ferréol. . . . ¶ Aug. 29: "Querelle" (1983, Fassbinder; in German), with Brad Davis, Franco Nero, and Jeanne Moreau; and "The Wizard of Babylon" (1983, Dieter Schidor; in German), a documentary on Fassbinder's filming of "Querelle." . . . ¶ From Aug. 30: "The Marriage of Maria Braun" (1979, Fassbinder; in German), with Schygulla.
Theatre 2: "Chocolat" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).
Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 2: "Casualties of War" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Carnival of Souls" (1962, Herk Harvey).
Theatre 2: "Rude Awakening" (Aaron Russo and David Greenwalt), with Cheech Marin, Eric Roberts, Julie Hagerty, and Robert Carradine.
Theatre 3: "The Navigator: An Odyssey Across Time" (Vincent Ward).
Theatre 4: "Dead Poets Society" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 22: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†). From Aug. 23: "Cookie" (Susan Seidelman), with Peter Falk, Emily Lloyd, Dianne Wiest, Michael V. Gazzo, Brenda Vaccaro, and Adrian Pasdar.
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Abyss" (James Cameron), with Ed Harris, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Michael Biehn.
Theatre 4: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Abyss."
Theatre 6: "Casualties of War" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Do the Right Thing" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lock Up" (John Flynn), with Sylvester Stallone and Donald Sutherland.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 24: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan. From Aug. 25: "Millennium" (Michael Anderson), with Kris Kristofferson and Cheryl Ladd.

Worldwide Cinemas, 49th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 24: "Do the Right Thing" (†). From Aug. 25: "The Adventures of Milo and Otis" (Masanori Hata).
Theatre 3: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 4: "Casualties of War" (†).
Theatre 5: "Casualties of War" (†).
Theatre 6: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Dead Poets Society" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Abyss" (James Cameron), with Ed Harris, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Michael Biehn.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through Aug. 29: "Cheetah" (Jeff Blyth).
From Aug. 30: "The Wizard of Oz" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
Through Aug. 22: "Do the Right Thing" (†).
From Aug. 23: "Cookie" (Susan Seidelman), with Peter Falk, Emily Lloyd, Dianne Wiest, Michael V. Gazzo, Brenda Vaccaro, and Adrian Pasdar.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Through Aug. 24: "Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills" (†).
From Aug. 25: "Romero" (John Duigan), with Raul Julia.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"A Chorus of Disapproval" (Michael Winner), with Anthony Hopkins and Jeremy Irons.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
Through Aug. 24: "Field of Dreams" (†).
From Aug. 25: "Do the Right Thing" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through Aug. 29: "Dead Poets Society" (†).
From Aug. 30: "Shirley Valentine" (Lewis Gilbert), with Pauline Collins.

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 24: "A Taxing Woman Returns" (Juzo Itami; in Japanese). From Aug. 25: "The Little Thief" (Claude Miller; in French).
Theatre 3: "The Music Teacher" (Gérard Corbiau; in French).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).
Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Let It Ride" (Joe Pytka), with Richard Dreyfuss.
Theatre 3: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child" (Stephen Hopkins), with Robert Englund.

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Theatre 4: "Rude Awakening" (Aaron Russo and David Greenwalt), with Cheech Marin, Eric Roberts, Julie Hagerty, and Robert Carradine.
Theatre 5: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Aug. 22: "Lock Up" (John Flynn), with Sylvester Stallone, Donald Sutherland, John Amos, Darlanne Fluegel, and Sonny Landham. From Aug. 23: "Cookie" (Susan Seidelman), with Peter Falk, Emily Lloyd, Dianne Wiest, Michael V. Gazzo, Brenda Vaccaro, and Adrian Pasdar.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 24: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan. From Aug. 25: "Millennium" (Michael Anderson), with Kris Kristofferson and Cheryl Ladd.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "The Abyss" (James Cameron), with Ed Harris, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Michael Biehn.
Theatre 2: "Casualties of War" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 24: "Eddie and the Cruisers II: Eddie Lives" (directed by Jean-Claude Lord), with Michael Paré and Matthew Laurance. From Aug. 25: "Wired" (Larry Peerce), with Michael Chiklis.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 22: "Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton, Carey Lowell, Robert Davi, Talisa Soto, and Anthony Zerbe. From Aug. 23: "Cookie" (Susan Seidelman), with Peter Falk, Emily Lloyd, Dianne Wiest, Michael V. Gazzo, Brenda Vaccaro, and Adrian Pasdar.
Theatre 4: Through Aug. 24: "Friday the 13th, Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan" (Rob Hedden). From Aug. 25: "Millennium" (Michael Anderson), with Kris Kristofferson and Cheryl Ladd.
Theatre 5: "Let It Ride" (Joe Pytka), with Richard Dreyfuss, David Johansen, Teri Garr, and Allen Garfield.
Theatre 6: "Lock Up" (John Flynn), with Sylvester Stallone, Donald Sutherland, John Amos, Darlanne Fluegel, and Sonny Landham.

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through Aug. 24: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks; and "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†).
From Aug. 25: "The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy, Tommy Lee Jones, and John Heard.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).
Theatre 3: "Rude Awakening" (Aaron Russo and David Greenwalt), with Cheech Marin, Eric Roberts, Julie Hagerty, and Robert Carradine.
Theatre 4: "Cheetah" (Jeff Blyth), with Keith Coogan.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child" (Stephen Hopkins), with Robert Englund.

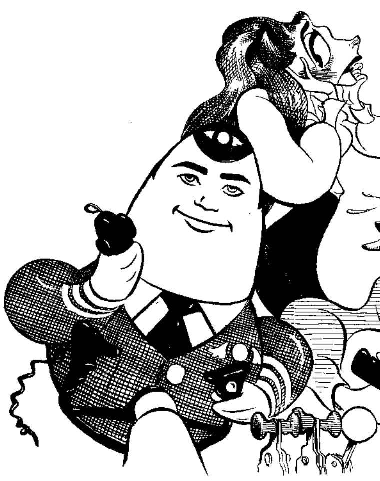
National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 2: "Casualties of War" (†).

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

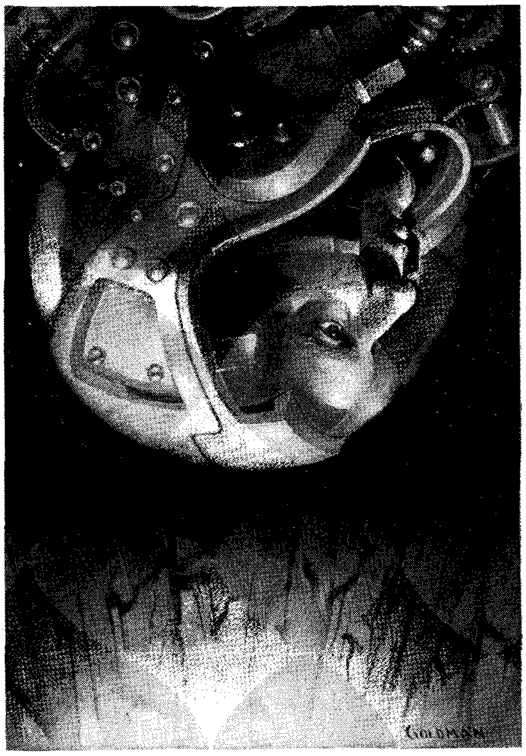
REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Aug. 21: "Our Hospitality" (1923, directed by Buster Keaton and Jack G. Blystone), with Keaton; and "The Freshman" (1925, Sam Taylor and Fred Newmeyer), with Harold Lloyd.
Aug. 22: "Palmy Days" (1931, Edward Sutherland), with Eddie Cantor, George Raft, and Charlotte Greenwood; and "State Fair" (1933, Henry King), with Will Rogers, Janet Gaynor, and Lew Ayres.
Aug. 23-24: "Speedy" (1928, Ted Wilde; silent), with Harold Lloyd; and "Blockheads" (1938, John G. Blystone), with Laurel and Hardy.
Aug. 25-26: "To Be or Not to Be" (1942, Ernst Lubitsch), with Carole Lombard, Jack Benny, Robert Stack, and Felix Bressart; and "The Man Who Came to Dinner" (†).
Aug. 27-28: "A Damsel in Distress" (1937, George Stevens), with Fred Astaire, Joan Fontaine, and Burns and Allen; and "Ship Ahoy" (†).
Aug. 29-30: "Way Out West" (†) and "Go West" (1925 †).



Julie Hagerty, Robert Hays, and their inflatable autopilot in "Airplane!"

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Aug. 22: "To Have and Have Not" (1944, Howard Hawks), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Walter Brennan; and "Dark Passage" (1947, Delmer Daves), with Bogart, Bacall, and Agnes Moorehead.
Aug. 23-24: "Dangerous Liaisons" (1988, Stephen Frears), with Glenn Close, John Malkovich, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Uma Thurman; and "The French Lieutenant's Woman" (1981, Karel Reisz), with Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons.
Aug. 25-26: "The Ruling Class" (1972, Peter Medak), with Peter O'Toole and Arthur Lowe; and "Eat the Rich" (1988, Peter Richardson).
Aug. 27: *"Day for Night" (†); and* "The Woman Next Door" (1981, François Truffaut; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Fanny Ardant.
Aug. 28-29: "Raiders of the Lost Ark" (1981, Steven Spielberg), with Harrison Ford and Karen Allen; and "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" (†).
From Aug. 30: "The Accidental Tourist" (1988, Lawrence Kasdan), with William Hurt, Kathleen Turner, and Geena Davis; and "Beaches" (1988, Garry Marshall), with Bette Midler and Barbara Hershey.



Ed Harris in "The Abyss"

Film Forum 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590)
Aug. 21: "Dr. X" (1932, Michael Curtiz), with Preston Foster, Fay Wray, Lee Tracy, and Lionel Atwill; and "Mystery of the Wax Museum" (1933, Curtiz), with Atwill, Wray, and Glenda Farrell.
Aug. 22: "I Married a Monster from Outer Space" (1958, Gene Fowler), with Tom Tryon and Gloria Talbott; and "The Space Children" (1958, Jack Arnold).
Aug. 23-24: "Giant from the Unknown" (1958, Richard E. Cunha), with Buddy Baer; *"Frankenstein's Daughter" (1958,* Cunha), with John Ashley and Sandra Knight; and "She Demons" (1958, Cunha), with Irish McCalla.
Aug. 25-26: "Metropolis" (†); and "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919, Robert Wiene; silent), with Werner Krauss, Conrad Veidt, Lil Dagover, and Friedrich Feher.
Aug. 27: "The Fearless Vampire Killers" (1967, Roman Polanski), with Jack MacGowran and Sharon Tate; and "Nosferatu, the Vampyre" (1979, Werner Herzog; in German), with Klaus Kinski, Isabelle Adjani, and Bruno Ganz.
Aug. 28: "Chandu the Magician" (1932, William C. Menzies), with Bela Lugosi and Edmund Lowe; and "Just Imagine" (†).
Aug. 29-30: "20 Million Miles to Earth" (1957, Nathan Juran), with William Hopper; and "Mysterious Island" (1961, Cy Endfield), with Michael Craig, Joan Greenwood, and Michael Callan.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Aug. 21: "Feel My Pulse" (1928, Gregory La Cava; silent), with Bebe Daniels, William Powell, and Richard Arlen; and "Going Straight" (1916, C. and S. Franklin; silent), with Eugene Pallette.
Aug. 22: "Masculine Feminine" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard), with Jean-Pierre Léaud; and "Le Gai Savoir" (1968, Godard; in French), with Léaud.
Aug. 23: "The Brasher Doubloon" (1947, John Brahm), with George Montgomery; and "The Big Sleep" (1946; Howard Hawks), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Martha Vickers.
Aug. 24: "Hollywood Shuffle" (1987, Robert Townsend), with Townsend; and "I'm Gonna Git You Sucka" (1989, Keenen Ivory Wayans), with Wayans, Bernie Casey, and Antonio Fargas.
Aug. 25-26: "Heathers" (1989, Michael Lahmann), with Winona Ryder and Christian Slater; and "Blue Velvet" (1986, David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan, Isabella Rossellini, Dennis Hopper, and Laura Dern.
Aug. 27: "The Wedding March" (1967, Marco Ferreri; in Italian), with Ugo Tognazzi; and "Heart and Soul" (1948, Duilio Coletti and Vittorio De Sica; in Italian), with De Sica.
Aug. 28: "The Final Extra" (1927, James P. Hogan; silent), with Mervyn LeRoy and Marguerita De La Motte; and "The Dancer's Peril" (1917, Travers Vale; silent), with Alice Brady and Montagu Love.
Aug. 29: "Lean on Me" (1989, John G. Avildsen), with Morgan Freeman; and "Stand and Deliver" (1988, Ramon Menendez), with Edward James Olmos and Lou Diamond Phillips.
Aug. 30: "The Naked Gun" (1988, David Zucker), with Leslie Nielsen, Priscilla Presley, and Ricardo Montalban; "Airplane!"

(†); and "Top Secret" (1984, Jim Abrahams, David Zucker, and Jerry Zucker), with Val Kilmer.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Aug. 21: "The Damned" (1969, Luchino Visconti), with Dirk Bogarde, Ingrid Thulin, and Helmut Berger; and "The Innocent" (1976, Visconti; in Italian), with Giancarlo Giannini, Laura Antonelli, and Jennifer O'Neill.

Aug. 22: "The Browning Version" (1951, Anthony Asquith), with Michael Redgrave, Jean Kent, and Nigel Patrick; and "The Winslow Boy" (1950, Asquith), with Robert Donat, Cedric Hardwicke, Francis L. Sullivan, and Margaret Leighton.

Aug. 23: "Anna Christie" (1930, Clarence Brown), with Greta Garbo, Charles Bickford, and Marie Dressler; and "Anna Karenina" (1935, Brown), with Garbo, Frederic March, and Basil Rathbone.

Aug. 24: "Coup de Torchon" (1981, Bertrand Tavernier; in French), with Philippe Noiret, Isabelle Huppert, Jean-Pierre Marielle, and Stéphane Audran; and "A Sunday in the Country" (1984, Tavernier; in French).

Aug. 25-26: "The Spiral Staircase" (†); and "Rebecca" (1940, Alfred Hitchcock), with Joan Fontaine, Laurence Olivier, Judith Anderson, George Sanders, and Florence Bates.

Aug. 27: "La Strada" (1954, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Anthony Quinn, Richard Basehart, and Giulietta Masina; and "Umberto D." (1952, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian).

Aug. 28: "Forbidden Games" (1952, René Clément; in French), with Brigitte Fossey and Georges Poujouly; and "Gervaise" (1956, Clément; in French), with Maria Schell, François Périer, and Suzy Delair.

Aug. 29: "League of Frightened Men" (1937, Alfred E. Green), with Walter Connolly, Lionel Stander, and Eduardo Ciannelli; and "Meet Nero Wolfe" (1936, Herbert Biberman), with Edward Arnold as Wolfe.

Aug. 30: "Whistle Down the Wind" (1961, Bryan Forbes), with Hayley Mills and Alan Bates; and "The Spirit of the Beehive" (1973, Victor Erice; in Spanish).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Hollywood films made in 1939. Aug. 21 at 2:30: "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" (directed by Alfred Werker), with Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce, and Ida Lupino. . . . ¶ Aug. 21 at 6: "The Cat and the Canary" (Elliott Nugent), with Bob Hope, Paulette Goddard, and Gale Sondergaard. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 2:30: "Invitation to Happiness" (Wesley Ruggles), with Irene Dunne, Fred MacMurray, and Charles Ruggles. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 6: "On Borrowed Time" (Harold S. Bucquet), with Lionel Barrymore, Cedric Hardwicke, and Beulah Bondi. . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 2:30: "The Cat and the Canary." . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 6: "Fifth Avenue Girl" (Gregory La Cava), with Ginger Rogers, Walter Connolly, and Tim Holt. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 2:30: "Made for Each Other" (John Cromwell), with Carole Lombard, James Stewart, and Charles Coburn. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 6: "Invitation to Happiness." . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 2: "Fifth Avenue Girl." . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 5: "Ninotchka" (Ernst Lubitsch), with Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, and Ina Claire. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 2: "Wuthering Heights" (William Wyler), with Merle Oberon, Laurence Olivier, Flora Robson, David Niven, and Geraldine Fitzgerald. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 5: "Made for Each Other." . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 2:30: "Ninotchka." . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 6: "The Flying Deuces" (Edward A. Sutherland), with Laurel and Hardy. . . . ¶ Aug. 29 at 2:30: "Dark Victory" (Edmund Goulding), with Bette Davis, George Brent, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Humphrey Bogart, and Ronald Reagan. . . . ¶ Aug. 29 at 6: "Wuthering Heights."

Film Society of Lincoln Center—New Wave French films. Aug. 21 at 6:15: "This Man Must Die" (1969, Claude Chabrol). . . . ¶ Aug. 21 at 8:45: "My Night at Maud's" (1969, Eric Rohmer), with Jean-Louis Trintignant and François Fabian. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 6:15: "Day for Night" (1973, François Truffaut), with Jacqueline Bisset and Jean-Pierre Léaud. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 8:45: "Claire's Knee" (1971, Rohmer), with Jean-Claude Brialy. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 6:15: "Céline and Julie Go Boating" (1973, Jacques Rivette), with Dominique Lebourier and Juliet Berto. . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 6:15: "Chloe in the Afternoon" (1972, Rohmer). . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 8:30: "Lacombe, Lucien" (1974, Louis Malle). . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 6:15: "The Marquise of O." (1976, Rohmer). . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 8:30: "Mon Oncle d'Amérique" (1980, Alain Resnais), with Gérard Depardieu, Nicole Garcia, and Roger-Pierre. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 2: "Le Pont du Nord" (1981, Rivette), with Pascale Ogier and Bulle Ogier. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 5: "Confidentially Yours" (1983, Truffaut), with Fanny Ardant and Trintignant. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 7:30: "Hail Mary" (1984, Jean-Luc Godard). . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 9:30: "Poulet au Vinaigre" (1985, Chabrol). . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 2: "Summer" (1986, Rohmer). . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 4:15: "Vagabond" (1985, Agnès Varda), with Sandrine Bonnaire. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 6:30: "Au Revoir les Enfants" (1987, Malle). . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 8:45: "La Bande des Quatre" (1988, Rivette). (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911.)

American Museum of the Moving Image, 36th St. at 35th Ave., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Aug. 23 at 2:30: "The Death Kiss" (1932, Edwin L. Marin), with David Manners, Adrienne Ames, and Bela Lugosi. . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 2:30: "Nickelodeon" (1976, Peter Bogdanovich), with Burt Reynolds, Ryan O'Neal, and Tatum O'Neal. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 2:30: "Her Splendid Folly" (1933), with Lillian Bond. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 1: "Hollywood Roundup" (1937), with Buck Jones, Grant Withers, Helen Twelvetrees, and Shemp Howard. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 3: "Stranded" (1927, Phil Rosen), with Shirley Mason. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 5: "The Talk of Hollywood" (1929, Mark Sandrich), with Nat Carr and Fay Marbe. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 1: "Star Dust" (1940, Walter Lang), with Linda Darnell, John Payne, Roland Young, and Charlotte Greenwood. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 3: "The Talk of Hollywood." . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 5: "Stranded." . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 2:30: "Hollywood Roundup."

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—Aug. 24 at 8: "The Gold Rush" (1925, Charlie Chaplin; silent), with Chaplin, Georgia Hale, and Mack Swain. Organ accompaniment written and played by Lee Erwin.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

Airplane! (1980)—If you were a teen-ager in the late fifties and read the movie lampoons in *Mad* and watched a lot of TV series shows and a lot of cheapie old movies on television and remembered parts of all of them, jumbled together into one dumb movie—that's "Airplane!" It's compiled like a jokebook. Except for a genuinely funny sequence that parodies "Saturday Night Fever," it has the kind of pacing that goes with a laugh track. But the three writer-directors (Jim Abrahams and David and Jerry Zucker) keep the gags coming pop pop pop, and the picture is over blessedly fast. With Julie Hagerty and Robert Hays as the young lovers, and Leslie Nielsen, Peter Graves, Robert Stack, Lloyd Bridges, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar; celebrities such as Howard Jarvis, Maureen McGovern, Jimmie Walker, and Ethel Merman turn up in bits. Based on the 1957 movie "Zero Hour."—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Aug. 30.)

Batman—Tim Burton's powerfully glamorous comic-book epic, with sets angled and lighted like film noir, goes beyond pulp. It has a funky, nihilistic charge, and an eerie, poetic intensity. Michael Keaton is the fabulously wealthy Bruce Wayne, who patrols the sinister nighttime canyons of Gotham City in the guise of Batman, and Jack Nicholson is the sniggering mobster Jack Napier, who turns into the leering madman the Joker. The two are fighting for the soul of the city that spawned them. The movie is underwritten, but it has so many unpredictable spins that what's missing doesn't seem to matter much. It's mean and anarchic and blissful. Written by Sam Hamm, Warren Skaaren (and uncredited others), based on characters created by Bob Kane. With cinematography by Roger Pratt; design by Anton Furst; costumes by Bob Ringwood; a plangent score by Danny Elfman; and songs by Prince. The cast includes Jack Palance, Kim Basinger, Jerry Hall, and Robert Wuhl.—P.K. (Reviewed in our issue of 7/10/89.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Cinema I; through Aug. 22. . . . ¶ Cinema II; starting Aug. 23.)

Casualties of War—A great, intense movie about war and rape, based on a Vietnam incident of 1966 that was reported in this magazine (October 18, 1969) by the late Daniel Lang. He gave an emotionally devastating account of the actions of a squad of five American soldiers who kidnapped a Vietnamese village girl, raped her, and then covered up their crime by killing her. One of the five men refused to take part in the rape, and, despite threats and attempts on his life, forced the Army to bring the other four to trial. He's the one who suffers from guilt: he can't forgive himself for his inability to save the girl's life. Directed by Brian De Palma, the movie has the purity of films such as "Grand Illusion" and "Shoeshine"; it's the culmination of his best work. Sean Penn gives a daring performance as the squad's twenty-year-old leader; Michael J. Fox is impressive as the soldier who can't keep quiet; Thuy Thu Le is the dazed, battered girl who haunts the movie long before she's dead. Also with Erik King as Brownie, John Leguizamo as Diaz, John C. Reilly as Hatcher, Don Harvey as Clark, Ving Rhames as Lt. Reilly, and Sam Robards as the chaplain. The adaptation (too explicit in a few places) is by David Rabe; the cinematography is by Stephen H. Burum; the music is by Ennie Morricone.—P.K. (8/21/89) (Baronet, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Olympia, and National Twin.)

Chocolat—Whatever Claire Denis's first feature is supposed to be about, it proves, at least, that the English don't have a monopoly on swanky colonial torpor. The movie is constructed as an extended flashback: a young Frenchwoman (named France) travelling in Africa remembers her fifties girlhood in a remote outpost of Cameroon, where her father was a district officer. Most of this story consists of smoldering looks exchanged by the girl's beautiful mother (Giulia Boschi) and the family's handsome African "boy," Protée (Isaach de Bankolé). When Maman feels herself becoming too hot and bothered at the sight of the noble black man, she brusquely orders him to fetch something; Protée deals with his frustration by taking a lot of showers. Nothing actually happens. In denying him any kind of release for his pent-up desire, Denis encourages us to think she's making a political point. What she's really doing is dehumanizing him—treating him as a gleaming hunk whose anger and wounded reserve just make him more exotically alluring. "Chocolat" looks pretty good, but it's merde in a fancy wrapper. In French.—T.R. (Bleecker Street Cinema.)

Day for Night (1973)—François Truffaut made this tribute to the conventional movies that gave him pleasure. He himself plays a director who is shooting an American-financed film called "Meet Pamela," with Jean-Pierre Léaud, Jean-Pierre Aumont, Jacqueline Bisset, and Valentina Cortese. "Day for Night," unfortunately ordinary in its approach to character, is very childlike—filled with a deeply innocent love of the magic of moviemaking. There's not much to it, though it's graceful. In French.—P.K. (Cinema Village; Aug. 27.)

Dead Poets Society—Robin Williams gives an astonishingly empathic performance as an eager, dedicated prep-school teacher in the late fifties. This teacher talks to his boys about the passions expressed in poetry and helps them release their creative impulses. But one of the boys, soaring on his new confidence, lacks the shrewdness and courage

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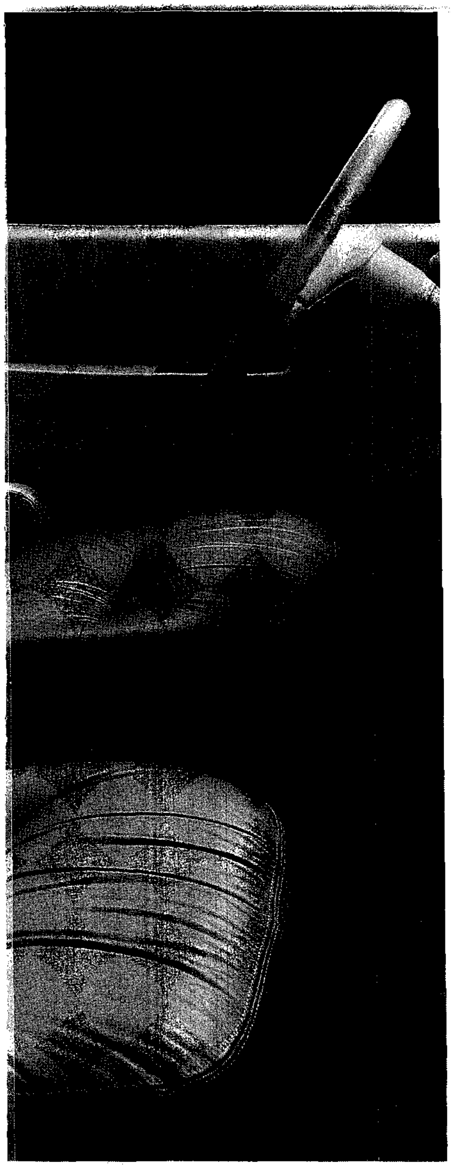

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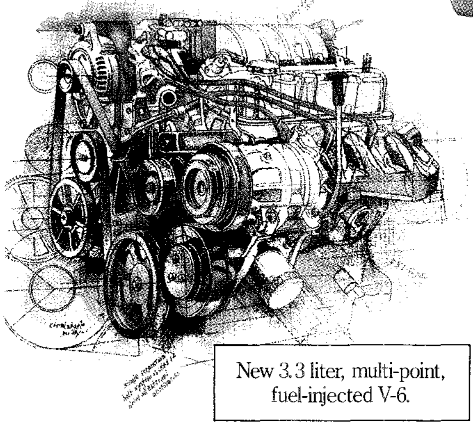

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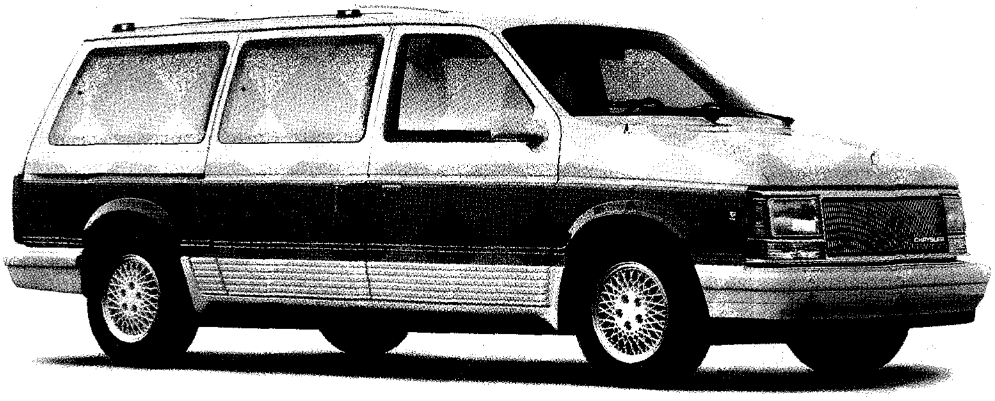

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to deal with his rigid, uncomprehending father, and makes a disastrous choice. Directed by Peter Weir, from a script by Thomas Schulman, the picture draws out the obvious and turns itself into a classic. Weir, it appears, is more interested in the elegiac than in the dramatic. Like his "Gallipoli," this film has a gold ribbon attached to it. With Robert Sean Leonard, Ethan Hawke, Josh Charles, Gale Hansen, and Kurtwood Smith and Norman Lloyd.—P.K. (6/26/89) (68th St. Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Guild. . . . ¶ Loews Paramount; through Aug. 29.)

Do the Right Thing—The third feature by Spike Lee takes place in the black neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, on a punishingly hot day; the focus of the action is a pizzeria, Sal's Famous, which is apparently the last white-owned business on the block; and the climax is a riot sparked by a monstrous act of police brutality. At its most basic, Lee's intention is to demonstrate how in a racially polarized society the slow accumulation of small irritations can swell to something huge and ugly and lethal. It's a solid idea for a movie, and initially the picture provides its share of incidental pleasures. And, although most of the many characters Lee shows us are types, at least there are a lot of different ones, and their encounters are often funny. But Lee goes wrong by pushing his material to a "powerful" climax, a Scorsese-like explosion of violence: he sacrifices political clarity for the sake of the big statement. He's nimble-witted and passionate, but his movie seems to shout at us rather than speak to us. In addition to writing, producing, and directing, Lee plays the pivotal role of Mookie, the pizza deliveryman. Others in the cast are Danny Aiello (as Sal), Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Giancarlo Esposito, Bill Nunn, Rosie Perez, Joie Lee, John Turturro, and Richard Edson; as a trio of middle-aged street-corner philosophers, Paul Benjamin, Frankie Faison, and Robin Harris are responsible for the movie's best, loosest scenes.—T.R. (7/24/89) (23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ 57th St. Playhouse; through Aug. 22. . . . ¶ 59th Street East Cinema, and Worldwide Cinemas; through Aug. 24. . . . ¶ Cinema 3; starting Aug. 25.)

Eleanor Powell in "Ship Ahoy"

Field of Dreams—Doggerel emotion. Kevin Costner, a New Age farmer in Iowa, longs to be reconciled with his dead father, a minor-league baseball player whose outlook he had rejected in the sixties. He hears a whispered command to build a baseball field, and when he does the spirits of Shoeless Joe Jackson (Ray Liotta) and the other White Sox who were barred from baseball for life after the 1919 World Series scandal arrive and play regularly. This is only the beginning of the hero's mystical encounters. That the film is sincere doesn't mean it's not manipulative; when the weepers in the audience start up, you may feel like a pariah if you're not moved. Adapted by the writer-director Phil Alden Robinson from W. P. Kinsella's 1982 novel "Shoeless Joe." With Amy Madigan, James Earl Jones, Burt Lancaster, Dwier Brown as the father, Gaby Hoffman, Timothy Busfield, and Frank Whaley.—P.K. (5/1/89) (Cinema 3; through Aug. 24.)

Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle—Eric Rohmer's latest picture doesn't belong to his "Comedies and Proverbs" cycle, and it isn't the beginning of a new series, either. It's not much of anything, actually—just a quartet of sketches about a country girl (Joëlle Miquel) and a city girl (Jessica Forde). Most of it was shot, in 16 mm., while Rohmer and his crew were waiting to film the "green ray" effect for his 1987 "Summer"; this movie was conceived as a diversion, an agreeable time killer, and it's very, very slight. The first episode, "The Blue Hour," which takes place in the country, is the most satisfying: an elegant little essay on natural sounds and the value of silence. The remaining three—set in Paris, where Reinette and Mirabelle share an apartment—are no more than anecdotes: casual, graceful, and utterly trivial. Also with Fabrice Luchini, Philippe Laudenbach, Marie Riviere, and Béatrice Romand. In French.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Go West (1925)—Not one of the great Buster Keaton comedies. It's perhaps unique among his films in that it aims for intense pathos; however, it's sad and funny at the same time—which wasn't true of Chaplin's pathos. Keaton plays Friendless—a lonely, buffeted, uncomplaining drifter without home, country, or dime. Having found the city's heart cold, he hides in a freight train going to Arizona, and there among the cacti he finds his first and only comfort and fellowship in a sad-eyed cow. Together they weather it through storm and sunshine. Keaton is so unembarrassed and so unself-consciously stoic in adversity that the pathos is never offensive—not even when a dog he tries to pat moves away from him. It's a strange movie, directed and partly written by Keaton right after the breakup of the team he had been working with since his two-reeler days. There's an amazing finale, in which Friendless and Brown Eyes the Cow round up hundreds of steers that are bellowing through the streets of Los Angeles. Silent.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 29-30.)

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids—A contraption invented by a suburban nerd scientist (Rick Moranis) cuts both his kids and the neighbors' down to size: a quarter of an inch. Unaware of what has happened, and unable to hear their pipsqueak cries, Dad sweeps them into a dustpan, dumps them in a garbage bag, and hauls the bag out to the curb. The kids have to make their way back to the house across the (not very recently mowed) lawn—a long trek for tiny, tiny legs. There are adventures, of course, engineered by the sort of special-effects "magic" that probably even the youngest audiences have learned by now to dread. The real surprise of this movie—which was directed by Joe Johnston, an effects specialist from Industrial Light & Magic, and which carries an immense list of technical credits (including a "Scorpion Crew," a "Bee Sequence Crew," and a "Stop Motion Ant Crew")—is that it's friendly, good-humored, and unpretentious. Johnston manages to scale down not only the kids but also the movie's sense of its own importance. Also with Matt Frewer, Marcia Strassman, and Kristine Sutherland; Jared Rushton, Amy O'Neill, Thomas Brown, and Robert Oliveri are the kids. The imaginative cinematography is by Hiro Narita—T.R. (Embassy 1; through Aug. 24.)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade—This mediocre third film in the Indiana Jones trilogy—a reprise of the first, "Raiders of the Lost Ark"—is a mixture of cliffhanger and anti-Nazi thriller and religious spectacle. It's enjoyable, but familiar, and the action lacks the exhilarating, leaping precision that the director, Steven Spielberg, is famous for. The only real spin is in the slapstick teamwork of Harrison Ford, as the archeologist-adventurer Indy, and Sean Connery, as Indy's father, a medievalist who's too engrossed in his studies to pay much attention to his daredevil son's triumphs. With River Phoenix playing Indy as a boy, Alison Doody, Denholm Elliott, John Rhys-Davies, and Julian Glover. The screenplay, by Jeffrey Boam, is based on a story devised by the producer George Lucas and Menno Meyjes.—P.K. (6/12/89) (Eastside Cinema, and Embassy.)

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984)—In this follow-up of "Raiders of the Lost Ark," the director, Steven Spielberg, creates an atmosphere of happy disbelief: the more breathtaking and exhilarating the stunts are, the funnier they are. Nobody has ever fused thrills and laughter in quite the way that he does here. The movie acknowledges its momentum; it glories in that acknowledgment. It has an exuberant, hurtling-along spirit. Spielberg starts off at full charge in the opening sequence and just keeps going. The whole movie is designed as a shoot-the-chutes, yet he seems relaxed, and he doesn't push things to frighten us. Harrison Ford is the hero, Ke Huy Quan plays his child sidekick Short Round, and Kate Capshaw is the gold-digger heroine. The plot involves them with an odious boy maharajah and Mola Ram (an anagram for Malomar), the high priest of a cult of Kali worshippers, who come right out of the 1939 adventure comedy "Gunga Din." This is one of the most sheerly pleasurable physical comedies ever made. A Lucasfilm Production, from a story idea by George Lucas, and a script by Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz. The score, by John Williams, is too heavy for the tone of the film, and it's too loud.—P.K. (Cinema Village; Aug. 28-29.)

Just Imagine (1930)—Perhaps the only sci-fi musical comedy ever made, this is set in New York fifty years in the future—1980. It's a lighthearted, cheerfully foolish view of scientific progress: papier-mâché skyscrapers soar into the painted heavens, stop-and-go signs refer to the traffic of airplanes, J-21 (John Garrick) is a suitor for the hand in marriage of LN-18 (Maureen O'Sullivan), and he and his pal RT-42 (Frank Albertson) pilot a rocket ship to Mars. What helped to make it a hit were the broad antics of the Swedish-accented yokel comic El Brendel in the role of Single-O, a Rip van Winkle character who had died in 1930 and was revived in 1980; he's a stowaway on the Mars expedition. The script and the songs are by Lew Brown, B. G. De Sylva, and Ray Henderson; David Butler directed; Seymour Felix choreographed. With Mischa Auer, Marjorie White, and Hobart Bosworth.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Aug. 28.)

Lethal Weapon 2—Chases, explosions, fights, barrages of insults, the odd moment of manly sentimentality—these are the standard elements of American action movies in the eighties, and the "Lethal Weapon" movies use them with an amazing lack of shame. There's lots of comedy, but no real relief: the punch lines slam into our brains like cars into plate-glass windows. The only thing that makes this movie at all distinctive is its hero, a reckless L.A. cop named Riggs, a role that allows Mel Gibson to zip through the picture like a free electron. Riggs isn't actually trying to kill himself this time (as he was in the first movie), but he's still a wild man and Gibson is still having a great time playing him. It's a mischievous, sprightly performance: he treats the action sequences as if they were slapstick routines. (Unfortunately, the director, Richard Donner, doesn't have as light a touch.) Danny Glover plays his partner, Murtaugh, an easygoing, conservative black family man; he's mostly called upon to react with horror to Riggs' dangerous antics, and the joke of their relationship gets a little tiresome. (The effect, sometimes, is of a white guy doing heroic stuff while his black pal shuffles along beside him. Glover, a good actor, deserves better.) Joe Pesci does small wonders with his supporting role as a ferrety, motor-mouthed money launderer, and Joss Ackland glowers like Alastair Sim as the head villain, a South African diplomat who smuggles drugs. Also with Patsy Kensit. Jeffrey Boam wrote the screenplay. The score is by Michael Kamen, Eric Clapton, and David Sanborn.—T.R. (Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 8th St. Playhouse, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and West Side Cinema.)

The Man Who Came to Dinner (1942)—In the thirties, the unctuous, sentimental Alexander Woollcott was loved by millions of radio listeners; Woollcott the outrageous master of euphonious insults was loved and hated by a small circle. Two members of this circle, George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, made him the hero and the target of their 1939 Broadway hit—a cheerful spoof on celebrity in that period. In this film version, the devastatingly adroit Monty Woolley (a former professor of drama at Yale) plays the arrogant, infantile Sheridan Whiteside, who goes on a lecture tour and breaks his hip while attending a dinner in his honor at the home of boring, worshipful fans. Stuck in that home until his hip mends, he takes it over and orders the residents around. Woolley has a wonderful way of looking at these hick fans with compassionate contempt—he feels sorry for them because they're too obtuse to appreciate how brilliant he is. The play, however, was built on topical jokes and a series of vaudeville turns, and in this version the jokes are flat and the turns seemed forced and not very funny. With Bette Davis as Whiteside's secretary, Reginald Gardiner impersonating Noël Coward, Jimmy Durante in the role based on Harpo Marx, Ann Sheridan as the sexpot actress, and Billie Burke, Richard Travis, George Barbier, and Grant Mitchell. Directed by William Keighley; the script, by the Epstein brothers, changed only a few lines.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 25-26.)

Metropolis (1926)—H. G. Wells called this German silent "quite the silliest film"; Hitler was so impressed by the conception that many years later he tried (unsuccessfully) to persuade its director, Fritz Lang, to make Nazi movies. Lang's prophetic city of the twenty-first century (suggested by his first view of New York) has two levels: one for the rich and pleasure-loving, another—labyrinthine, underground—for the slave-workers who tend the machines. The industrialist-tyrant who runs Metropolis plots to incite riots so that he can crush the workers' rebelliousness. His son has gone down to the workers and fallen in love with the saintly firebrand Maria (Brigitte Helm). The tyrant plots with an inventor, Rotwang (a mad, medieval type like Dr. Caligari and, with his mechanical arm, father to Dr. Strangelove), who, in a phenomenal science-fiction laboratory sequence, creates a steel double for Maria—the false Maria, who leads the masses to revolt. But the destruction gets out of hand, the children of the workers are about to be caught in a flood, and all of Metropolis would be destroyed were it not for the final alliance of the industrialist, his son, the true Maria, and the workers. One of the last examples of the imaginative—but often monstrous—grandeur of the Golden Period of the German film, "Metropolis" is a spectacular example of Expressionist design (grouped human beings are used architecturally), with moments of almost incredible beauty and power (the visionary sequence about the Tower of Babel), absurd ineptitudes (the lovesick hero in his preposterous knickerbockers), and oddities that defy analysis (the robot vamp's bizarre, lewd wink). It's a wonderful, stupefying folly. Script by Thea von Harbou (who did go to work for the Nazis).—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Aug. 25-26.)

Parenthood—The script, by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, is ambitiously constructed, tracing the relationships of several boomer-age parents with their kids, their siblings, and their own parents. The advantage of this arrangement is that none of the characters are onscreen very long: we have time to get sick of only about half of them, and some—especially the nervous, eager dad played by Steve Martin—are fun to watch. The drawback is that the movie has no drive. The dull title captures the tone precisely: the whole thing has been conceived generically, abstractly, and by the end the director, Ron Howard, is rushing from scene to scene tidying up loose ends, to make sure that each little individual drama gets its point across and that they all add up to a correct answer to the essay question "What is parenthood?" The movie tries very hard, but its wisdom is on the forlorn side. Also with Mary Steenburgen, Rick Moranis, Dianne Wiest, Jason Robards, Harley Kozak, Martha Plimpton, Keanu Reeves, and Tom Hulce.—T.R. (8/7/89) (34th St. East, Coronet, U. A. East, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills—The script, by Bruce Wagner, from a satirical sex-farce plot he devised with the director, Paul Bartel, calls for something like the goosey stylized acting that Charles Ludlam perfected at the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, but Bartel has directed with his usual home-movies sluggishness. Two houseboys, a cynic (Ray Sharkey) and a romantic (Robert Beltran), who work in adjacent mansions, bet on which one will be the first to make out with the other's employer—one a divorcée (Mary Woronov), the other a widow (Jacqueline Bisset). The households include various siblings, offspring, and hangers-on (Arnetia Walker, Ed Begley, Jr., Wallace Shawn, Paul Mazursky, Rebecca Schaeffer, Edith Diaz, and others)—all of them libidinous or gaga. Arnetia Walker manages to bring in some zesty horseplay, and Bisset's amused calm is occasionally pleasant, but mostly this is just mistimed, failed camp, and some of the lines that are meant to be screamingly dirty-funny come out screamingly sour.—P.K. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; through Aug. 24.)

Sex, lies, and videotape—Steven Soderbergh's smooth, handsome first feature generates a fair degree of psychological tension out of next to nothing. It's a triangle drama with a cunning little kink in it. The triangle consists of Ann (Andie MacDowell), a beautiful young Southern woman who has "never really been that much into sex"; her husband, John (Peter Gallagher), a sleazy yuppie lawyer; and her younger sister, Cynthia (Laura San Giacomo), who's sleeping with John. The kink is an old college pal of John's, named Graham (James Spader), a soft-spoken drifter who comes to town and changes everybody's life. Graham has sworn off sex, because, he says, it's the only way for him to stay honest; he's impotent, except when he's watching one of his dozens of home videos—all of them interviews he has conducted with women about sex. He's like a retired gunslinger, a laconic hombre who won't pull his artillery out of its holster because he's seen too much killin' already. This is "Shane" remade as a Southern psychodrama. But there's some real conviction in it—a mixed-up fervor that keeps us watching.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Plaza, Waverly, and Cinema Studio.)

In 1952, the screenwriter Cesare Zavattini, who had already collaborated with Vittorio De Sica on a succession of classics (the best known is "The Bicycle Thief"), declared that he hoped to create a movie so full of "truly significant and revealing" details that it would seem like "ninety minutes in the daily life of mankind." The same year, De Sica and Zavattini came as close as anyone ever has to achieving this goal. Their eruptively moving "Umberto D." (playing August 27 at Theatre 80 St. Marks), the story of a debt-ridden retired civil servant who's forced from his home by a cruel landlady, is neo-realism at its peak. The movie brings to mind a line from Tolstoy: "Ivan Ilyich's life had been most simple and most ordinary and therefore most terrible."

On the surface, "Umberto D." simply follows the title character, played with a tattered bourgeois hauteur by the retired professor Carlo Battisti, as he and his dog wander through Rome in a futile search for money and fellowship. But De Sica and Zavattini turn mundane rituals into eloquent presentations of character. The movie starts with its only panoramic scene: elderly men demand an increase in their pensions. (The sequence is echoed later in a dog pound.) De Sica tightens his focus so unerringly that the final shot—Umberto D. playing fetch, trying to win back his dog's alienated affections—is a prodigious expression of modern man's aloneness. De Sica made a handful of wonderful movies, but "Umberto D." is his masterpiece.

Ship Ahoy (1942)—Bert Lahr and Red Skelton turn up in this M-G-M musical starring Eleanor Powell; she taps all the way through, and at the end she taps out a message in Morse code. There are some relatively lively numbers, although Virginia O'Brien isn't as funny as she's meant to be. With John Emery, and Tommy Dorsey and his band, and its unbilled vocalist, Frank Sinatra. Some of the orchestrations are by Sy Oliver, and the number "I'll Take Tallulah" features Buddy Rich, along with Eleanor Powell. Directed by Eddie Buzzell, from Harry Clark's just barely functional script.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 27-28.)

The Spiral Staircase (1946)—Set in New England in 1906, it's about the activities of a finical strangler engaged in eliminating young women who don't measure up to his ideas of physical perfection. His preoccupation sets him in murderous pursuit of Dorothy McGuire, a harmless, attractive mute who serves as companion to gruff Ethel Barrymore, the bedridden mistress of a spooky mansion decorated with the hides of various wild animals and full of creaking doors, gates, and shutters. Robert Siodmak directed this little horror classic; it has all the trappings of the genre—a stormy night and a collection of psychopaths—but the psychopaths are quite presentable people, and this, plus the skillful, swift direction, makes the terror convincing. With George Brent, Kent Smith, Sara Allgood, and Elsa Lanchester.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 25-26.)

Way Out West (1937)—This satire of Westerns is probably Laurel and Hardy's most comically sustained feature, and it shows off their vaudeville skills in a couple of musical interludes. They do a classic soft-shoe shuffle outside a saloon; Hardy's lolling, elephantine grace has never been more ingratiating. And they sing "In the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia." As Mickey Finn, the villain in love with his own villainy, James Finlayson is practically a co-star, and Sharon Lynne is the voluptuous blond saloon girl. The film is leisurely in the best sense; you adjust to a different rhythm and come out feeling relaxed, as if you'd gone on vacation. James Horne directed.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 29-30.)

When Harry Met Sally . . .—Rob Reiner's movie, from a script by Nora Ephron, takes a screwball-comedy idea and inflates it like a rubber raft. Harry (Billy Crystal) and Sally (Meg Ryan) meet in the late seventies, rub each other the wrong way, and then, after breaking up with their partners, become close friends; all the while, they're conducting a running debate on the question "Can a man and a woman ever be just friends, without sex getting in the way?" It's a Rohmer movie played as a sitcom. Crystal muddles through amiably, but Ryan flounders: the filmmakers give her impossible, unplayable scenes, and all she can do is be adorable. The movie keeps telling us that it's real and truthful and universal. Everything in it seems false.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Beekman, Waverly, Worldwide Cinemas, and Regency. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas; through Aug. 22.)

The Wizard of Oz (1939)—Heavenly. Judy Garland as Dorothy, Bert Lahr as the Cowardly Lion, Ray Bolger as the Scarecrow, and Jack Haley as the Tin Woodman. Directed by Victor Fleming.—P.K. (Festival; starting Aug. 30.)

Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown—The most original pop writer-director of the eighties, Pedro Almodóvar is Godard with a human face—a happy face. The artificial is what sends him sky high, and the Madrid of this film is (as the closing song has it) "Puro Teatro." This is a movie where after a while you can't tell sexy from funny. Pepa (Carmen Maura), an actress who works in TV and commercials, turns on her answering machine and learns that she has been jilted. Infuriated, she dashes around, on spike heels, in a short, tight skirt, trying to confront her long-time live-in lover, the elegant, vain Iván (Fernando Guillén). The women of the title include Iván's early lover (Julieta Serrano), his new lover (Kiti Manver), and two (Rossy De Palma and María Barranco) who are involved with his son (Antonio Banderas). Sleek-legged and chic, they run the theatrical gamut. In Spanish.—P.K. (11/14/88) (Carnegie Screening Room.)

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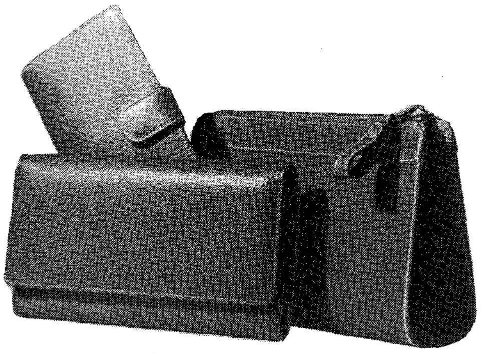

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

"USUALLY when you say 'Palestinian,' what Americans think is 'war' and 'terrorism,' " Amer Khalil, one of six actors recently in New York with the Palestinian theatrical troupe El-Hakawati, told us. "But the Palestinian people are like all the people in the world. They have artists, they have lovers. So the first good thing is just that the audience shows up and sees that there are Palestinian actors and there is Palestinian theatre."

Joe Papp, who originally booked El-Hakawati for the Public Theatre, abruptly dropped the engagement for fear of controversy, but the group was eventually invited to perform at the Dance Theatre Workshop, in Chelsea. The play the company put on there, "The Story of Kufur Shamma," recounts the forty-year search of a Palestinian man for the family and neighbors he lost in 1948, when his village was destroyed by war. After seeing it, we spoke with Mr. Khalil, a bearish, bearded man, who plays the role of fool to the unhappy hero, and also with the director and co-author of the play, François Abu Salem, and his wife and fellow-author, Jackie Lubeck.

We asked if the company members had been surprised when Mr. Papp cancelled.

"I must say, I was more surprised when he invited us," said Mr. Abu Salem, who is slight and intense. "But we weren't coming with a political point of view. It wasn't meant to be a play with a message or a theme. Jackie and I wrote it only because we happened to meet in life a man who was unable to adjust to the present time. He had lost his village, and we went through the whole process with him of going back and looking and remembering what was there."

Mr. Abu Salem told us that he was born in Bethlehem, of a French mother and a Palestinian father; was trained as an actor in Strasbourg; and in 1970 settled on the West Bank. There he began creating plays and eventually established El-Hakawati, the only professional Palestinian theatrical company. Ms. Lubeck—who acts in the play and, as far as we could tell, speaks fluent Arabic—is Brooklyn-born, of Russian-Jewish ancestry. She told us she dropped out of college in 1972, set off travelling, and wound up in Jerusalem by chance.

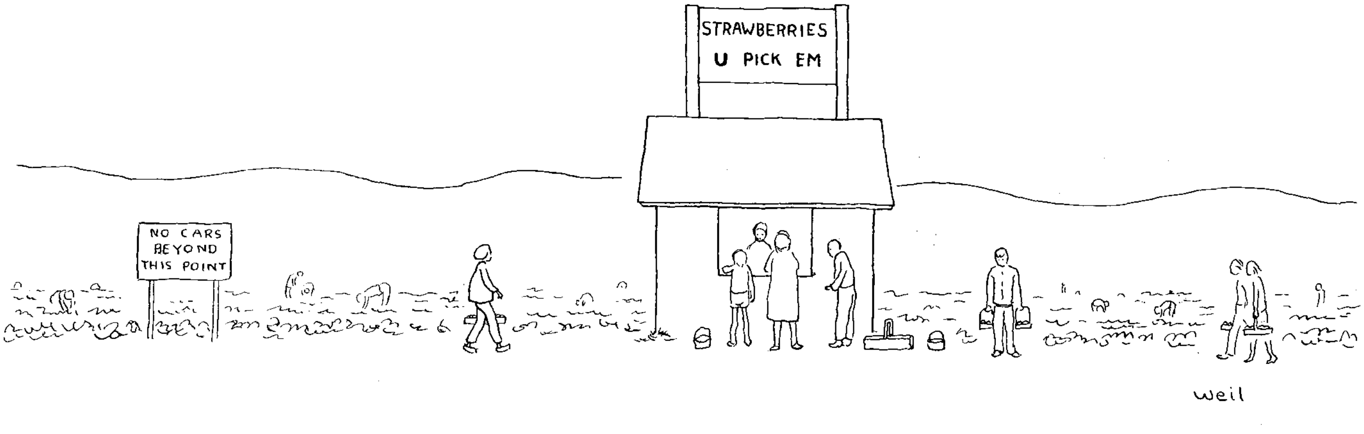
"When we met, Jackie was involved in a women's theatre company," Mr. Abu Salem recalled. "It was a small company, and Jackie was doing lights. I can't understand how they chose her to do that, because she has difficulty with even a Walkman or an Instamatic. I kind of saved her. Her speakers weren't working, and I showed her how to fix them. And she said"—Mr. Abu Salem hesitated—"something nice to me, so I invited all the company for dinner. Jackie stayed in my house, and she never left. That was in '75."

" 'You're gorgeous,' " Ms. Lubeck said. "The first two words I spoke to him were 'You're gorgeous.' He was so shy—he was there with a matchstick trying to fix my tape recorder. I took one look at him and fell in love with him. So I stayed."

We were curious. Had she said "You're gorgeous" in English or in Arabic?

"Who spoke Arabic?" Ms. Lubeck said. "I spoke Brooklyn. I learned Arabic from being exposed to it on the street, the same way I learned Hebrew. The first time I acted with El-Hakawati, I replaced someone who lived in Jericho, on the West Bank. It was difficult for her to be out at night, so I filled in. She had the role of a mute woman. It was quite convenient."

Was it a special pleasure for her



to have El-Hakawati performing in her native country?

"You bet. How could my parents possibly have guessed that Palestinian theatre—so ridiculous to their ears—would surprise them so? They thought the play was beautiful. They related to it and were moved by it. They came to Atlanta when we performed there, and my mother folded kaffiyehs and helped us pack."

We asked about the name El-Hakawati, which means The Storytellers.

"Around the Mediterranean, storytelling was for a long time the only way people could share their histories," Mr. Abu Salem said. "Arabs have a tendency not to be very visual—we are all hearing and thinking. There is no tradition of theatre in Arab culture. In 1971, when I started creating plays, there wasn't a single person on the West Bank who thought he would one day become an actor. I must tell you that Nabil"—Nabil El-Hajjar, who plays the obsessed hero—"is a professor of mechanical engineering. We've persuaded him to take a whole year off, because we think he can become an actor. But Palestinians have no schools for that, and we are so cut off from the rest of the Arab world. It's very difficult. Our next project is to create a little school in East Jerusalem for the performing arts."

We said that much of the humor in the play reminded us of American Jewish humor.

Mr. Abu Salem's eyes lit up, and he leaned forward. "Well, where are Jews from?" he said. "The usual colloquial expression for Jews in Arabic is *ibn'amm*—'cousins.' Obviously, there are even more similarities now, because now the Palestinians have a diaspora, too. I can't imagine how much closer people can be."

We asked who came to see El-Hakawati in East Jerusalem.

"Lots of foreigners," Mr. Abu Salem said. "The Israelis themselves—the average theatregoers—don't really come to East Jerusalem. It is still very much two cities. There is no wall, as in East Berlin, but there is still a drastic separation. And recently, with the *intifada*, people are afraid to come. Even with very close Israeli friends of mine, when I invite them to come I have to go and meet them on the West side and drive them to East Jerusalem in the car. The Israelis who have seen the play have been very moved and have not uttered a word of protest. They've said things like 'It's a very important and painful play for us.' We wish there were Israeli theatre companies who would have the same effect on us. Israeli theatre is much richer than ours, but the Israeli writers who have tried to touch the contemporary reality of relations between Arabs and Jews haven't gone deep enough. They either feel sorry for us or feel sorry and guilty. They haven't gone very far toward understanding the transformation they have been through as a colonizing country."

He lit a cigarette, and went on, "Our next play is about the Crusades—about strange and unexpected encounters of Oriental Muslims and Christians with Europeans. We're trying to bring more understanding not only between Israelis and Palestinians but between the Middle East and the West. I'm terrified of the idea that we can go back to so much intolerance. Well, it has never stopped, really. But what happened with Rushdie last year, these little signs—they are signs of what is hidden on both sides, how each perceives the other. I can't stand that sectarianism, that exclusivity. I don't like the idea of a state that is solely Muslim or solely Jewish. I've always thought that the separation they're talking about for the future—the two states—is pragmatic but in the long run a not very productive or generous kind of solution. I think the Israelis have got to rediscover that they belong to the Middle East—where they've always belonged, you know? We have got to be together again, and live together."

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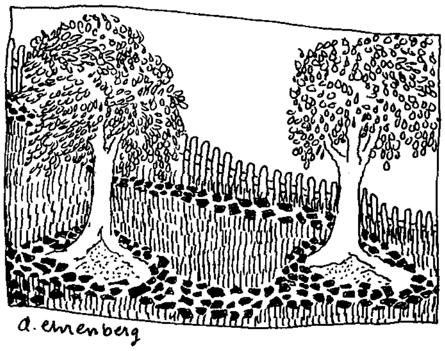
Novik and LaGuardia

AS the race for City Hall began heating up, along with the temperature, we decided that a talk with somebody who had worked for Fiorello LaGuardia—arguably the most independent and most incorruptible mayor our city has ever elected—might give us some perspective on the current crop of candidates. We settled on Morris Novik, an eighty-six-year-old retired radio executive, who was Mayor LaGuardia's director of communications from 1938 to 1945, and who continued to produce a weekly radio show with him until LaGuardia's death, in 1947. Mr. Novik, who divides his time between Westhampton Beach and the city, has spent his life in politics and in public-service radio. He grew up on the Lower East Side, helped to found the American Labor Party in 1936, and currently functions as a kind of elder statesman in what is loosely called the reform movement. He was in town not long ago to present the annual LaGuardia award to a graduating senior of the LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts (a school that the late Mayor had a hand in establishing), and he agreed to talk with us about his former boss over lunch after the ceremony.

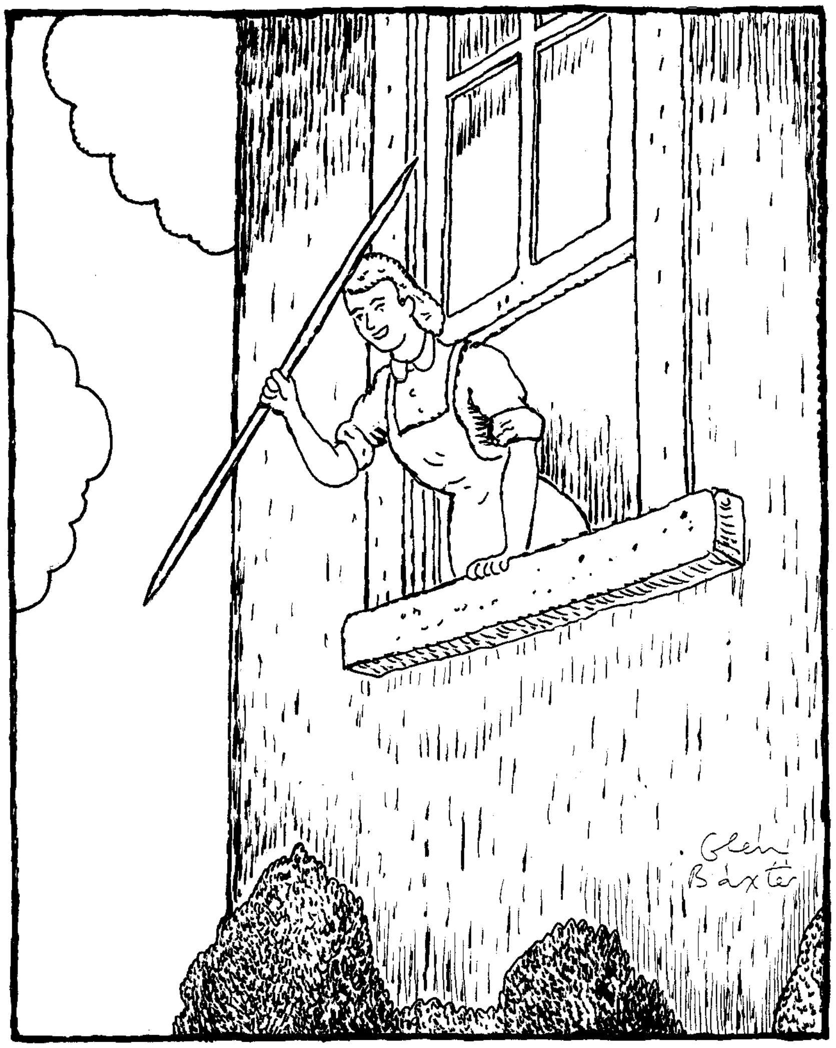


"Students of government praise LaGuardia as a great reformer and a brilliant politician," Mr. Novik told us. "But many ordinary citizens remember him as the man who loved to conduct the Goldman Band in Central Park and as the mayor who gave them practical advice about everything from world affairs to the price of tomatoes in his Sunday broadcasts. He was one of the first politicians to understand and use radio—he used the microphone to teach, to entertain, and to unite the various ethnic groups in the city. He could talk directly to many of them, because he'd lived in Europe and he spoke six or seven languages—Italian, Hungarian, Croatian, German, Yiddish. He was a warm, short-tempered, enormously energetic, emotional man, who would cry when something affected him deeply, but he was also a shrewd politician, who picked the best commissioners he could find, regardless of party, and didn't hesitate to fire anybody who didn't measure up to his high standards. Working for him was exciting, exhausting, and lots of fun. When I got home to Long Beach in the evening, my phone would often ring around dinnertime, and it would be the Mayor. He might have an idea for a radio talk on some civic issue. He might want me to meet him at Carnegie Hall for one of Toscanini's concerts. Or he might be curious or upset about something he'd heard over WNYC."

Mr. Novik told us that the Mayor's early life had provided him with a cosmopolitan outlook that is still rare in city politics. "LaGuardia was born in New York City, in 1882, but he grew up in Arizona, where his father was a cornet player in the Army band," he said. It turns out that the broad-brimmed hat LaGuardia always wore came from the time he spent riding burros out West. In 1898, his father left the Army and moved his family to Italy. When he died there, a few years later, LaGuardia went to work as an American consular officer, first in Budapest and then in Fiume. He returned to New York in 1906, became an immigration interpreter and then a lawyer, and was elected to Congress seven times—as a Republican. During the First World War, he learned to fly, and—while still a congressman—commanded an American reconnaissance squadron based at Foggia, behind the Italian-Austrian front. "The first time I saw him," Mr. Novik went on, "was in the fall of 1918, when Major LaGuardia, wearing a chestful of medals, came back to the Lower East Side to fight for a second term in Congress. I was a Socialist, campaigning for the opposition—an anti-war professor of economics named Scott Nearing—and I remember LaGuardia making speeches on street corners in that high-pitched voice of his, waving his arms and talking about the war. He buried Nearing in a public debate at Cooper Union a few days before the election, and went back to Congress five more times."

Twenty years later, when LaGuardia was beginning his second term as mayor, he asked Mr. Novik—by then the associate manager of station WEVD—to become his director of communications, and told him that the job involved reorganizing WNYC, the city-sponsored station. "I accepted after a frank talk," Mr. Novik said. "I told him, 'I want it to be clear that I don't always have to agree with you politically.' He said, 'That's reasonable as long as you don't act as the leader of the opposition.' And he said that he wouldn't fire me without three months' notice."

As communications director, Mr. Novik increased WNYC's quota of classical music (LaGuardia loved opera, and he kept in touch with Toscanini, Albert Spalding, and Josef Hofmann, among other prominent musicians) and produced programs that ranged from news coverage and political discussions to radio dramas. "We had a permanent line from the Mayor's office to our studio, across the street," he said. "The Sunday broadcasts that became so famous started on the afternoon of December 7th, when he talked for a half hour, without notes, about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He appealed to the public for calm, because he was afraid that some hotheads might start attacking our Oriental citizens. When he realized the enormous impact that this speech had made, he decided to do a regular series of Sunday-morning broadcasts. During the week, he'd collect letters, newspaper articles, and notes and throw everything into a desk drawer. About ten o'clock Sunday morning, he'd empty the drawer onto his desk, select a few things he wanted to discuss, and start talking. He never had a prepared script, and he rarely kept to the half-hour limit."



MOTHER'S JUDICIOUS DEPLOYMENT OF THE JAVELIN INSURED THAT VERY FEW INSURANCE SALESMEN EVER REACHED OUR DOORBELL.

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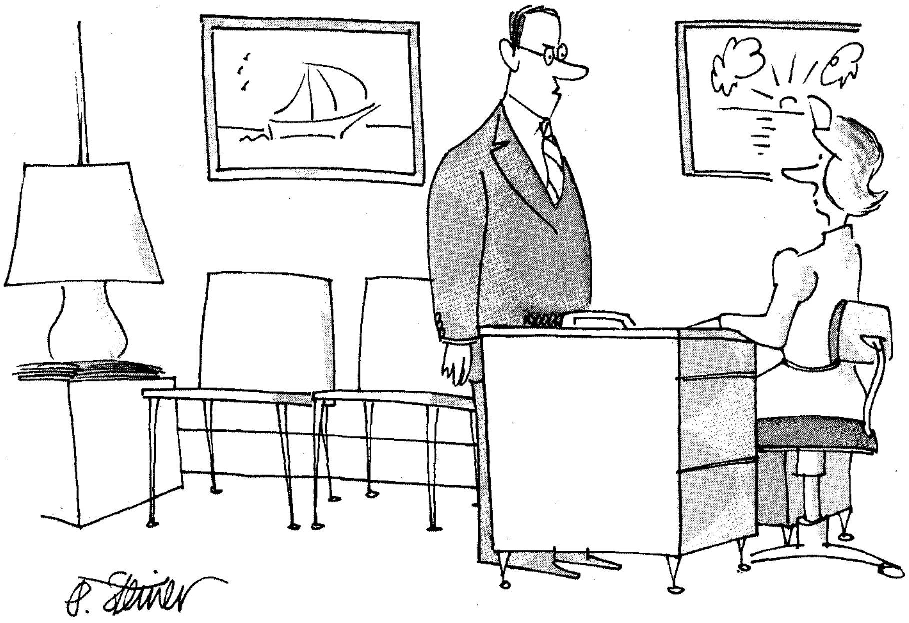
We asked Mr. Novik about La-

Guardia's relationship with President Roosevelt. "They became friends and political allies, though they belonged to different parties," he said. "In 1932, LaGuardia spent so much time working to elect Roosevelt that he lost his own congressional seat. And when he went back to Washington that year for the lame-duck session of Congress he sponsored some of the economic-relief legislation that became central to the New Deal. The next year, when LaGuardia ran for mayor on a Fusion ticket, Roosevelt couldn't support him publicly, but I'm convinced that the President helped things along by getting Ed Flynn, the boss of the Bronx, to put up a really hopeless Democratic candidate. Toward the end of the war, Roosevelt was planning to appoint LaGuardia the civil administrator in postwar Italy. Unfortunately, the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy—two conservatives, who didn't want to see a man so politically uncontrollable reshaping the Italian economy—threatened to resign if he did. The Mayor had already started fittings for the uniform that went with the job when Roosevelt called him down to Washington to give him the bad news. LaGuardia came back to New York and was unusually subdued for several days. Then he told a few of us at City Hall what had happened. He must have been terribly disappointed, but all he said to Roosevelt at the time was 'Well, Mr. President, you are the Commander-in-Chief.' "

Legend

ON an afternoon when most of the city was huddled in front of air-conditioners and expecting rain, we drove down to the Jersey shore. Frankly, we needed a break. The humidity was so heavy it felt as if we were wearing it (wet wool came to mind), and at one point we were brought to a complete halt when the clouds dropped a wall of water on the expressway and forced us onto the shoulder. The pleasures of the Jersey shore have been celebrated—mythologized, even—by Bruce Springsteen, in his paeans to towns like Asbury Park. That afternoon, though, we were drawn by the prospect of hearing one of Springsteen's colleagues and former influences—Bob Dylan. The forty-eight-year-old iconoclast, singer of protest songs, and seeker of cosmic truths was making his Atlantic City début at the open-air Grandstand Under the Stars, adjacent to Bally's Grand Casino Hotel. You don't expect to hear Bob Dylan songs—works that were part of the fabric of the sixties—on a stage backed up to the gilded entrance of an Atlantic City casino. Yet here we were, just off the Boardwalk, south of a phrenologist's parlor, and a short hop from a video-game arcade. We felt as if we were visiting Desolation Row, in the song from the "Highway 61" album.



"Does the doctor hug?"

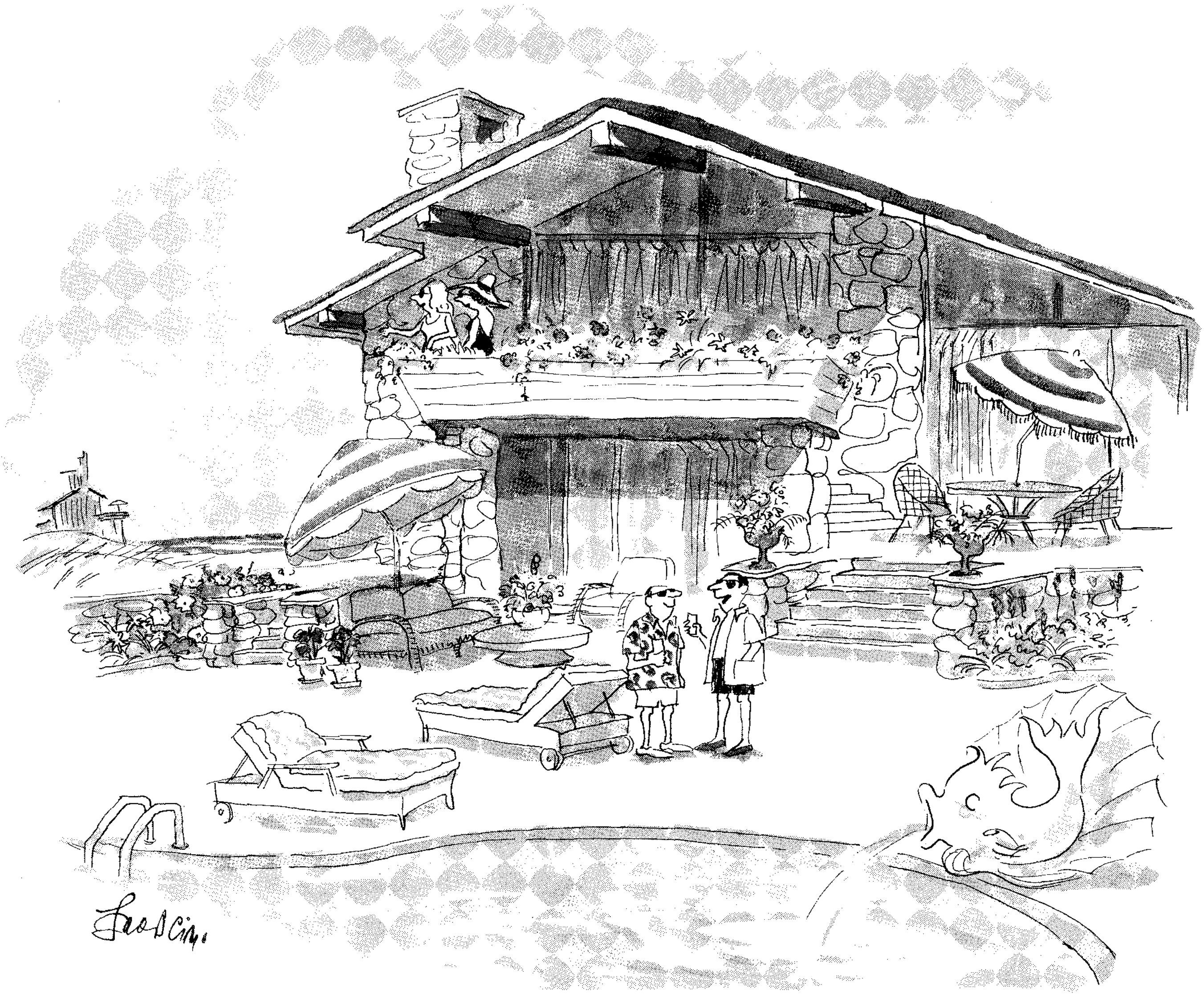
In choosing this venue, the inscrutable Dylan had again put his followers to the test, presenting another puzzle in his endlessly varied career. Would the old magnetism work amid the glitz of the new Atlantic City? Would anyone who wanted to hear the man once called the poet of his generation come to the land of star-crossed luck and lounge life to do so?

At five-thirty, we got into a conversation with an athletic-looking man in his early thirties, who was taking the air along the Boardwalk, killing time during pre-concert sound checks. He was wearing a T-shirt with the singer's image in a scallop-edged border, so that it looked like a stamp. "I got it at a Dylan get-together this year in Chicago," he told us. "No, it was in Cleveland. Last year, the get-together was in Chicago. This is my forty-fifth Dylan concert. I have limited musical interests. Basically, I like Dylan. He'll play fifteen songs—six electric, then three acoustic, then four electric, then an acoustic encore and an electric encore."

Next, we met a shy, soft-spoken man in his forties who was waiting at the entrance to the alley between the grandstand and the performers' bus in the hope of catching a glimpse of someone notable moving into the stage area during rehearsal. "I never thought that at this age I'd be hanging around looking at the Dylan bus," he said. "I feel like a teen-ager." He told us that he expected Dylan to "mix it up" during the concert but to "stay away from religion," and added, "Actually, I kind of liked those songs. Of course, I'm a Lutheran minister, so maybe that's why."

A blond woman in a white tank top and black slacks was chatting with a clutch of her friends on the Boardwalk. "I wouldn't say I've been listening to Dylan for a lot of years," she told us. "I'm more into Supertramp. But lyrically you can't beat Dylan." She added that she didn't see anything incongruous in his playing Atlantic City. "Here we are, right on the beach, next to the sea," she said. "What could be more spiritual than that?"

Dylan went on at a little after nine, and the concert was indeed a tightly wound set, as the man in the Dylan T-shirt had predicted. He dipped into every phase of his career, and restored a soulful, wailing harmonica that had



"Sand, sea, and sky—that's enough for me."

• •

been missing from his live performances in recent years. He seemed most energized in the electrically amplified songs—"Highway 61," "I Want You," "Like a Rolling Stone"—but he proved he could still bring a raw edge to such acoustic pieces as "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)." At times, his shaggy head was lit from behind, recalling the halo effect on the cover of his "Greatest Hits" albums, and it was disorienting to look past a haloed Dylan and see the neon sign proclaiming "Bally's Grand." The audience in the grandstand consisted mostly of well-dressed people in their thirties and forties, but outside we could see remnants of other eras. Hippie-like men and women were sitting in lawn chairs on the Boardwalk or on the sand, taking in the sounds. The irony of the night was not lost on the singer: midway through the second set, he broke from his own material to offer a wry aside—a waltz-tempo version of the country classic "I'd Be a Legend in My Time."

During a break, we spoke with a man in high-water pants and a white snap-brim hat, who told us he had driven three-hundred miles to see the show. "Dylan has influenced my life more than anyone else except perhaps Timothy Leary," he said, and he added, "My hope is that a friend of mine can translate his early lyrics into Chinese. I have sent Dylan a note through his people asking for permission." He also told us that his first memory of Dylan was of listening to "Mr. Tambourine Man" as a teenager. "That surreal sort of imagery and the notion that there is something else besides the reality," he said. "Ever since, I've been aligned with and alienated by his different personas."

"What do you do for a living?" we asked.

"For the last six or seven years, I've been doing gambling," he said. "Mostly football."

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WORLD OF HIGH FINANCE: The following communication from Chemical Bank recently landed on the desk of a friend:

> The payment you promised has not been received. We are disappointed, as we granted the extension you requested based on our faith in your intentions. It is imperative that the overdue amount of $.00 be sent by return mail.
>
> COLLECTION DEPARTMENT

MONEY, FAME, AND BEAUTIFUL WOMEN

SOMEONE must have been saying something nice about Nathan Cone, for when he walked in the door of the Concordance Institute that fine morning Celie, the receptionist, said, "Listen! Congratulations! Everybody is just tickled pink!"

Nathan said, "Well, thank you, thank you!," missing the moment when it had been possible to ask her, "Why? What did I do?," for there came Barbara, the institute's archivist, down the stairs saying, "Here he is! The man of the hour!" She hugged Nathan and said, "It's a real coup for the institute! Leslie says to come up to his office and be congratulated."

"Let me go get my coffee," said Nathan. "I can't take congratulations on an empty stomach."

Celie said, "Why don't I bring you up a cup? Milk? Sugar?"

"Absolutely not!" said Nathan. "I'll get my own coffee." The institute's style was democratic. It went without saying that director Leslie Shakespere, the members of the board, the founders, the fellows, including the Nobel laureate, Winterneet, and the junior people—associates, student internes, administrative and secretarial staff—were all on a first-name basis, except that everyone spoke of and to the black cleaning woman as Mrs. Coots.

"Barbara," began Nathan. "What on earth did I—" But the good plain woman was beaming at him, and Nathan said, "How on earth did you hear?"

Barbara said, "Celie told me!"

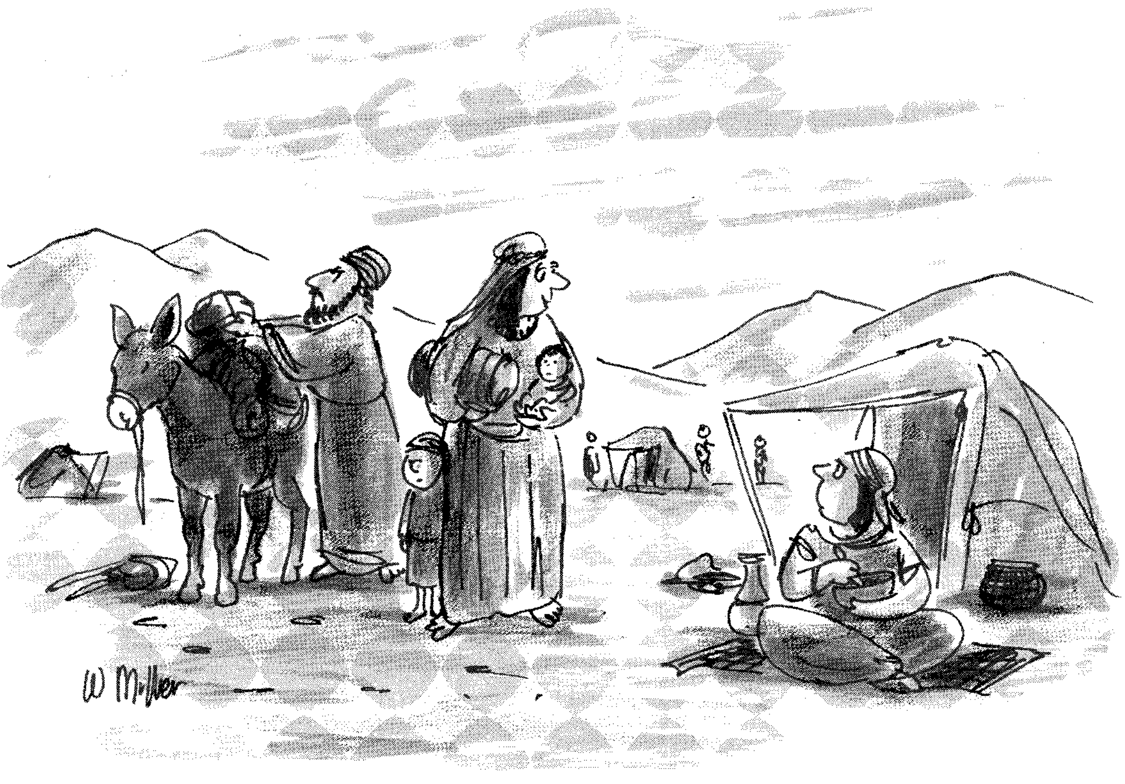
Celie said, "Your wife called. She says please call her the minute you get in."

"Aha," Nathan said. "So that's how the milk got into the coconut!"

Now Nathan wished he had turned around when Nancy came out onto the porch that morning. Somebody must have called while he was taking the garbage round by the garage. As Nathan had got into the car, the back of his head knew Nancy was standing on the porch. She spoke his name, but Nathan had already turned on the ignition, or took that moment to turn it on, thinking, I can't hear her over the ignition. There was a stoplight at the corner. Nathan pictured Nancy standing on the porch. There was a moment when it had been possible to back into the Stones' driveway and turn around. Nathan pictured himself standing on the porch face to face with Nancy. The light changed and Nathan Cone had driven the ten minutes to Concordance University, parked, entered the institute, and been congratulated and made much of.

NAT CONE was a bulky man, with a heavy tread. A powerful growth of very dense, very black beard gave him a look of enthusiasm. At forty-two, Nat was older than the associates, older than some of the younger fellows—the only poet among scholars. Eight years ago, when Winterneet received his Nobel Prize and retired from active participation in the work of the institute, he'd proposed Nathan Cone, who had been a student of his.

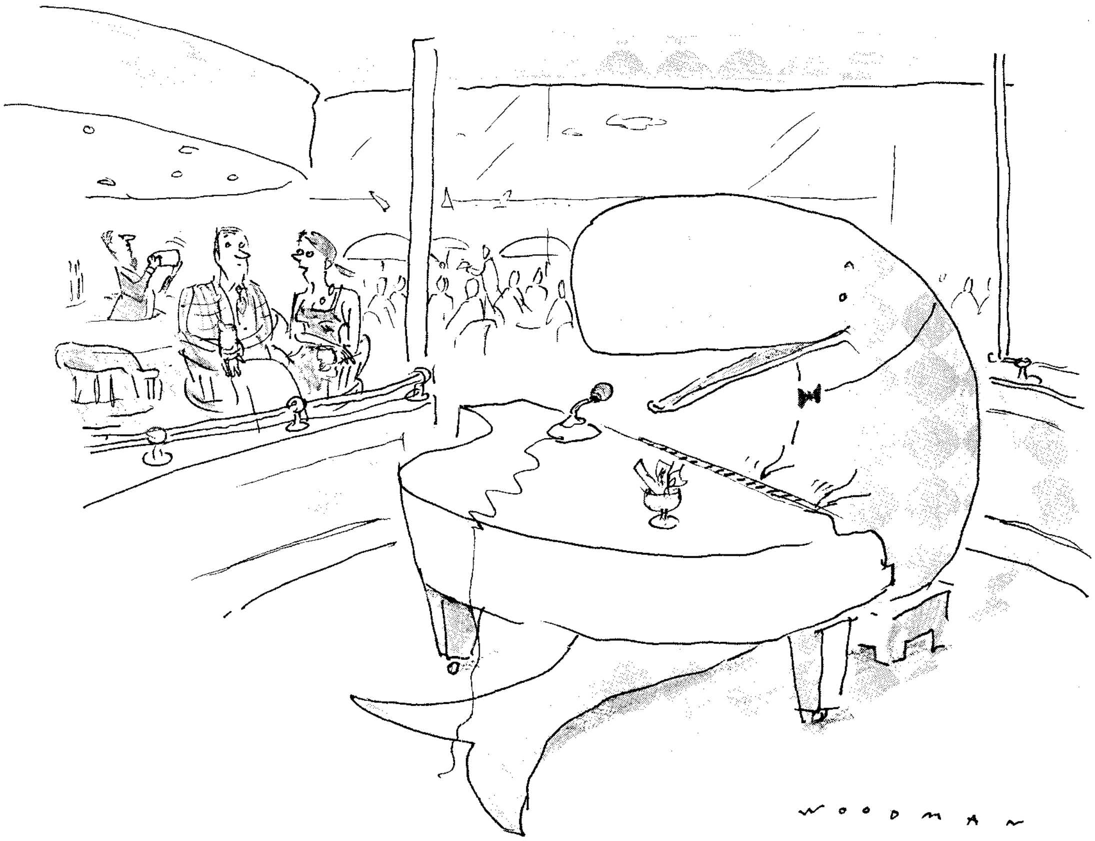
Nat and Nancy had been married three years when they moved to the small university town of Concordance, in Connecticut. They were excited by their good fortune. The institute was one of the oldest of the genus "think tank"—a beneficent human organization that paid its members more or less a living wage to read and write and think. The institute, loosely connected with Concordance University, was housed on campus, in the first president's rococo residence, which it had long since outgrown.



"We're moving to someplace called Ur. It's an entirely new concept in group living."

Nathan walked, that fine morning, down the carpeted hall to applause from Betty Bennet and Jenny Bernstine, who had to make do with desks shoved out of the way under two carved archways. Betty, Leslie Shakespere's executive assistant, confirmed that she, certainly, was tickled pink. Jenny came and kissed Nathan and said, "It's a real shot in the arm for the institute!" Jenny was the wife of Joe Bernstine, one of the founders; she helped Barbara in the library. Jenny walked with Nat into the big old kitchen.

The kitchen looked out onto the first president's rose garden



"What's remarkable is that just last week he was lying despondent on the beach."

• •

grown wild. Director Leslie Shakespere was sitting on the corner of the kitchen table pouring coffee for himself and Yvette Gordot into the blue-and-white mugs with which Jenny had replaced the cracked and handleless remnants of the first president's Spode. The kitchen was the institute's piazza, the forum, where social and intellectual exchange took place, and coffee was always hot, if not necessarily good. There was, as often as not, a batch of cookies freshly baked by one of the secretaries or institute wives.

The little cozy crowd stopped talking and looked very kindly at Nathan. Nathan understood that they had been saying nice things about him. It was a moment in which the heart in Nathan Cone's chest should have experienced gratification and disseminated it into the bloodstream to be carried throughout the body like a good first wallop of whiskey. But Nathan's heart was distracted by the aftertaste of his bad behavior to his wife, and his head was preoccupied: Nat Cone was like a man accosted by a fellow who calls him by his name, asks after his wife—a fellow whose name he has forgotten, whose face he cannot recall ever having seen before. Nathan was busy keeping himself from getting trapped, and alert for clues.

"So when's it going to be?" asked Yvette. Yvette was the institute's mathematician.

Nat said, "Nobody has told me any details."

Yvette asked Leslie, "Was there some celebration the year you got yours?"

"There's the traditional trip up the Hudson on the Crewbergs' yacht. Nathan, it really is a charming event. Nancy will like it. You have a tuxedo?"

"Good grief," said Nathan.

"You can rent them," said Jenny. "All you have to buy are the shiny shoes."

Now Joe Bernstine walked in and his wife said, "Joe, guess what! Nat's won the Columbia Prize for Poetry!"

"I won the Columbia Prize for Poetry!" Nathan Cone said to himself and felt the jolt of satisfaction. It took this form in Nathan Cone's mind: I always *thought* I was the best. Now the world says I am; my colleagues are hearing the world say it. Maybe I really *am*? Now the heart in Nathan's chest heaved and rasped in a way that, had the occasion not been pleasant, Nathan might not have recognized as pleasure.

Now Celie came to the door of the kitchen and said, "Your wife's on the phone."

Nathan picked up his coffee cup and walked down the hall to his office. Nancy's voice said, "What would it have cost you to put your head out the goddam car window when you heard me calling you?"

Nathan said, "How could I hear you calling me when I had the goddam ignition on? What did you want?"

"*Want!*" said Nancy. "I don't 'want' a thing. I called to remind you to pick up a bottle to bring to the Bernstines'. I take it you'd forgotten we're having dinner at the Bernstines'."

"Why should you 'take' any such thing?" said Nathan, making a note on the pad before him to cancel the racquetball date he'd made with the new associate. "Any news?" he asked her.

"Nope."

"No calls?" Nathan asked her.

"Why? Are you expecting something?"

That's when Nathan Cone should have told his wife that he had won the Columbia Prize for Poetry, but Nathan's mouth stayed shut that moment and the moment that followed. Then he said, "One never gives up expecting *something*."

"Not me, not anymore. *Please* do *not* be late *again*," said Nathan's wife.

"Right you are," said Nathan, and they both hung up.

WHEN Nathan walked into Leslie's office, Leslie stood up and shook his hand in the pleasantest conjunction of formality and friendship. "Sit! Sit down a moment," he said. “The institute would like to pick up the tab for the round trip for both of you, and the hotel. Why don’t you have a long weekend in New York?”

“How very kind,” Nathan said.

“We are really very pleased,” Leslie said.

Nathan said, “Have you any idea what I went and got this thing *for*? I haven’t had a book in three years.”

“It’s not for *a* book,” Leslie said. “This is for a life’s work.”

“My œuvre,” said Nathan and laughed.

Leslie laughed and said, “Ah, yes! Our œuvres!”

“Œuvres here, œuvres there, œuvres, œuvres everywhere,” said Nathan. They laughed because they were pleased and fond of each other.

“Incidentally,” said Nathan, “nobody has yet actually informed me that I have won the damn thing.”

NATHAN turned in to the Bernstines’ drive with time to spare, remembered he’d forgotten the bottle, and backed out. He had to drive way the hell into town, and as he drove he quarrelled with Nancy: It was her assumption that he would not remember that made him forget things. He arrived back in a rage.

“Sorry I’m so late,” Nathan said to Jenny. Nat could refuse to look, but he could not help seeing his wife standing by the fireplace—slender in black, with black-stockinged legs. He was shocked that she was so handsome, but Nancy had been handsome all along and clever and, in the beginning, very good to him. And Nathan Cone had kept right on being nothing but Nathan Cone.

“Not to worry,” Jenny was saying. “Yvette will be even later!”

How could anyone be cross with the winner of the Columbia Prize for Poetry? They came and stood around Nat—Joe and Jenny Bernstine, Leslie and Eliza Shakespere, the Stones, Alpha and Alfred, and Ilka Weissnix. The men embraced and patted Nathan repeatedly on the shoulder. Ilka and Eliza, who had not been at the institute and had not got to kiss Nathan in the morning, did it now.

Nancy’s eyes signalled Nathan to come over by the window. “I call you on the phone. You don’t think it worth your while to inform me that you won the Columbia Prize?”

“I didn’t inform you because nobody informed me.”

“What are you talking about?” said Nancy.

“Has anybody called at the house to inform you that I won a prize?”

“No.”

“Nobody called me.”

“How come everybody knows something of which you and I have not been informed?”

“Search me,” said Nathan. Nathan looked Nancy straight in the face. He said, “When I walked into this room it came to me that I’ve forgotten what you look like.” An emotion passed over Nancy’s face. If she had been going to speak, Nathan preëmpted her and said, “The reason I have forgotten what you look like is that I avoid looking at you. . . .”

“I noticed,” said Nancy.

“Because,” said Nathan, “it is unpleasant to be met with a perennial glare of exasperation.”

“Not exasperation. Disappointment.”

“Worse. What is nastier for a man than to be on perpetual notice that he’s being a disappointment?”

“Such a man might learn to behave differently,” said Nancy.

“I’m going,” said Nathan, “to behave differently: from here on in I’m not going to let you spoil things for me. I’m going to enjoy my prize,” and he turned and walked away to join in the welcome of Yvette Gordot, who had brought a late edition of the *Times*. Everybody pored over the piece on the Columbia Prizes, in which the name of the winner of the prize for poetry was misspelled Nathan C. Cones!

“Why do we think this is me!” said Nathan. “Nobody has officially informed me that I’ve won anything. Maybe this is not my prize.”

Yvette read, “ ‘The coveted prize for poetry goes to Nathan C. Cones.’ *Is* there a poet by the name of Nathan C. Cones?”

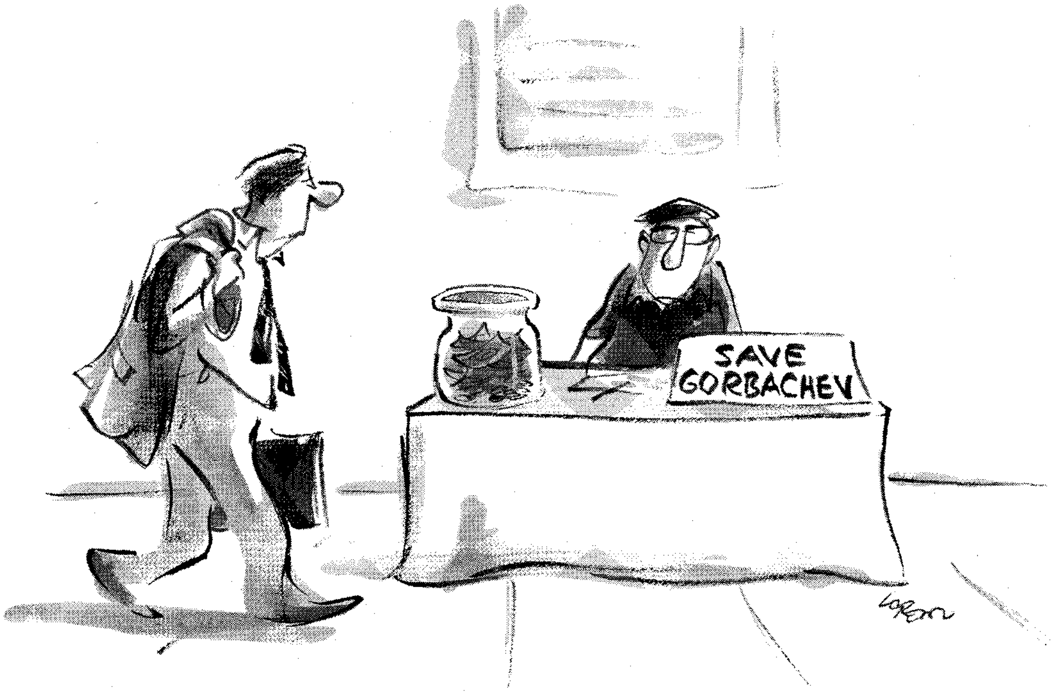
“Not that anybody’s heard of.”

“So, there you are! It’s you!”

“Of course! Of course it’s you!” everybody said, and then Jenny Bernstine called them in to dinner.

NATHAN AND NANCY CONE were seated at opposite ends of the table; their friends did not have to notice that they were not speaking or looking at each other. The talk was of prizes. “They’re funny things,” Nathan said. “A prize is the world patting you on the back, and then your friends pat you for having got patted.”

Leslie said, “My mother used to buy us children chocolate when we brought a bad report card home, on the principle that we must need cheering up.”



"She sounds very nice and very sensible."

"Yes, she was," said Leslie.

Ilka said, "What do prizes do for us?"

Nat cheerfully replied, "They promise money, fame, and . . ." He paused and, not looking at Nancy, added, "The love of beautiful women."

"I always wonder," said Ilka, "where we get off being disappointed when we don't win the prize, or the money, or the fame, or the love. Where is it written that we are *supposed* to have them?"

"Ilka, the European!" they said.

And so they talked, these habitual talkers, who were in the habit of talking together, and they said some things that they meant.

"Just clean out the gutters, Tony, and point the chimney."

• •

NANCY got into the car beside Nathan and said, "Nat, I'm happy for you. This is terrific. You deserve it. Shall we have a lovely time in New York?"

Nathan said, "We can't both go. It's too expensive."

"But you'll have the hotel room," said Nancy. "And the round trip—it's not as if it were the West Coast."

"I have to rent a tux, and buy shoes. You would need a gown."

"Doesn't the prize come with some money?"

"Five thousand dollars," said Nathan, "which we're *not* spending on clothes!"

"I have some money," said Nancy.

Nathan was not a mean man: he would have preferred his wife to buy the notion that a sensible economy kept her from coming to New York. But Nathan meant to keep Nancy and her perennial disappointments away from his prize, and he said, "You are not coming."

Nancy was silent. Silently they got out of the car, unlocked the back door in silence. They stood in the kitchen and Nancy said, "Being your wife has been no bowl of cherries, but it's had its compensations. I'm not a writer, I'm not a scholar; without you I wouldn't be at Concordance, wouldn't have met our friends, wouldn't have gone on the junket to the White House. So, if there's any fun going to happen I'm going to get a piece of it. I am coming with you."

Nathan said, "I can't stop you from going anywhere you please, but I don't have to talk to you."

"That's true," said his wife. "You don't have to talk to me." After a moment she said, "You are a louse, Nathan."

"And that's true, too," said Nathan sadly.

NAT put his suitcase in the trunk and shut the trunk. Nancy had to come round to the driver's side, open the door, and reach across Nat's lap to take the key out of the ignition so that she could unlock the trunk and put her suitcase in. She shut the trunk, got into the passenger seat, and handed Nat the keys without a word. Nat took them without a word.

Celie had booked adjacent places for them, but Nat went and sat in an empty seat in the bulkhead. In New York, he was among the first passengers to leave the plane and Nancy saw nothing of him in the airport. She took a cab to the hotel. The beds were twin. Nancy hung the gown she had borrowed from Eliza Shakespere inside the utterly empty closet and lay a long time in a hot bath. No bath is as long and luxurious as the bath in a hotel bathroom.

Nancy catapulted into the street. Let the heart be breaking, let life's last hope of happy love be draining drop by drop, Fifty-seventh Street on a clear June day is a turn-on. Nancy Cone walked down Fifth Avenue with the noon crowd, and all the rich old women and the vulgar young things wore their clothes with style that, high or low, had an idea behind it.

NATHAN's cab set him down amidst the noise and to-do at the foot of the gangway to the yacht—water-lapped, beflagged, begarlanded, a floating party. A thousand little lights swung their gentle halos in the blue air. The bluish air. The grayish-blue air. Grayed blue. Smoky blue, except smoky was what it wasn't. The electric-blue air? It's poetry's business to name what the language has not identified, and has no ready-made word for: the blue moment that a summer's day holds out against the oncoming dark—the festive dark. Every porthole was lit and redolent with scraps, with wraiths of music.

Nat joined the end of the queue and set the suitcase he'd been lugging all day long down on the corn of a fat woman in jeans, who yelped. "Sorry," Nat said. "I'm sorry!"

The fat woman's tall friend said, "That's—what was her name?—Lana Turner, is who that is. Isn't she dead?"

"Jesus God," the woman with the corn said. "That looks like—it *is!* That's Redford!"

It came to Nathan that the reason he was getting no closer to the entrance of the gangway, up which moved the evening-dressed couples, was that he had got himself ensconced behind the police barrier with the gawkers. Nat picked his suitcase up and said, "I'm sorry. I'm supposed to be inside. Sorry."

Nathan set his foot on red carpet, and wished he had Nancy's eye here to catch. He felt the gawks on his old raincoat. A small bottleneck at the entrance gave him a chance to put his suitcase down. Nathan peeled the raincoat off the rented tux he had got his regrettably overweight person into with maximum—with memorable—difficulty in an undersized stall in the men's toilet at the Forty-second Street Library.

The young woman with the clipboard was probably pretty when she wasn't harried. She looked down her roster and up it and back down. She asked Nathan if he had R.S.V.P.'d his invitation.

"No," Nathan said. "Because I never *got* an invitation."

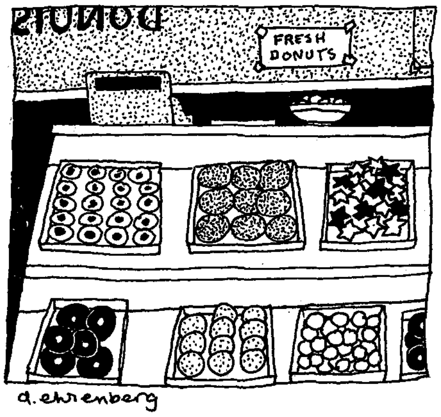
The girl looked at him. She might be said to have given him a look, and it was not pretty.

Nat said, "I'm one of the prizewinners—the prize for poetry. Nathan Cone."

The girl turned away—to look for a bouncer? This was the fortunate moment when Barret Winburg, an old New York acquaintance of Nat's, stepped on board. Barret, the winner of the prize for fiction, had his name promptly identified in its alphabetical place on the roster and vouched for Nathan Cone's not only *being* Nathan Cone but being the winner of the prize for poetry. "And long overdue, too," Barret told the girl. "You're looking at the man who might well be *the* poet of our generation."

"Jeez," Nat said, "I'm not even sure that I am *the* Nathan Cones—Cone, I mean."

The girl, relieved, smiled prettily and pointed the two prize-winners toward a table where they must, please, pick up their nametags. Nat had cause to be sorry he hadn't stuck with Barret. He'd asked to be shown to the cloakroom, where he stowed his coat and bag. By the time he got to the table, Barret was nowhere in sight. Unwilling to hassle the two smiling middle-aged volunteers, one in pink, one in silver, he found the tag that read "Nathan C. Cones" and carried it round the corner, where a trio of talented tuxedoed youngsters from Juilliard were playing Mozart. Nat took the card out of its holder and, using the wall as support, wrote "Nathan Cone" on the back, returned it to its plastic envelope, and pinned it on his lapel.



Nat walked into glamour. Mozart dropped gracefully away before a jazz combo at the foot of a stair. The smallest, blackest of the three musicians exposed his throat and blew a long, high note of unregenerate and seditious joy. Neither the laughing, slender couple who skittered past nor the two glittering old women who passed Nat on the bright stair looked like writers. They must be the rich people.

Nathan trailed his hand along a gleaming bannister of rubbed wood. Brass fittings flashed needlepoints of light. In a white-and-crimson space drinks were being served. A waiter put a glass in Nathan's hand. If Nancy's name was not on the roster, how would she make it on board? Where'd Barret

MY MOTHER IN OLD AGE

As my mother ages and becomes
Ever more fragile and precarious,
Her hands dwindle under her rings
And the freckled skin at her throat
Gathers in tender pleats like some startled fabric.
The blue translucence of her veins gives
The texture of her skin an agate gleam
And the dark-blue, almost indigo
Capillaries of her cheeks and forehead
Resemble the gentle roots
Of cuttings of violets
In sheltered jars.

I love her now more urgently
Because there is an unfamiliar and relentless
Splendor in her face that terrifies me.

"Oh, don't prettify decrepitude,"
She demands. "Don't lie!
Don't make old age seem so *ornamental!*"

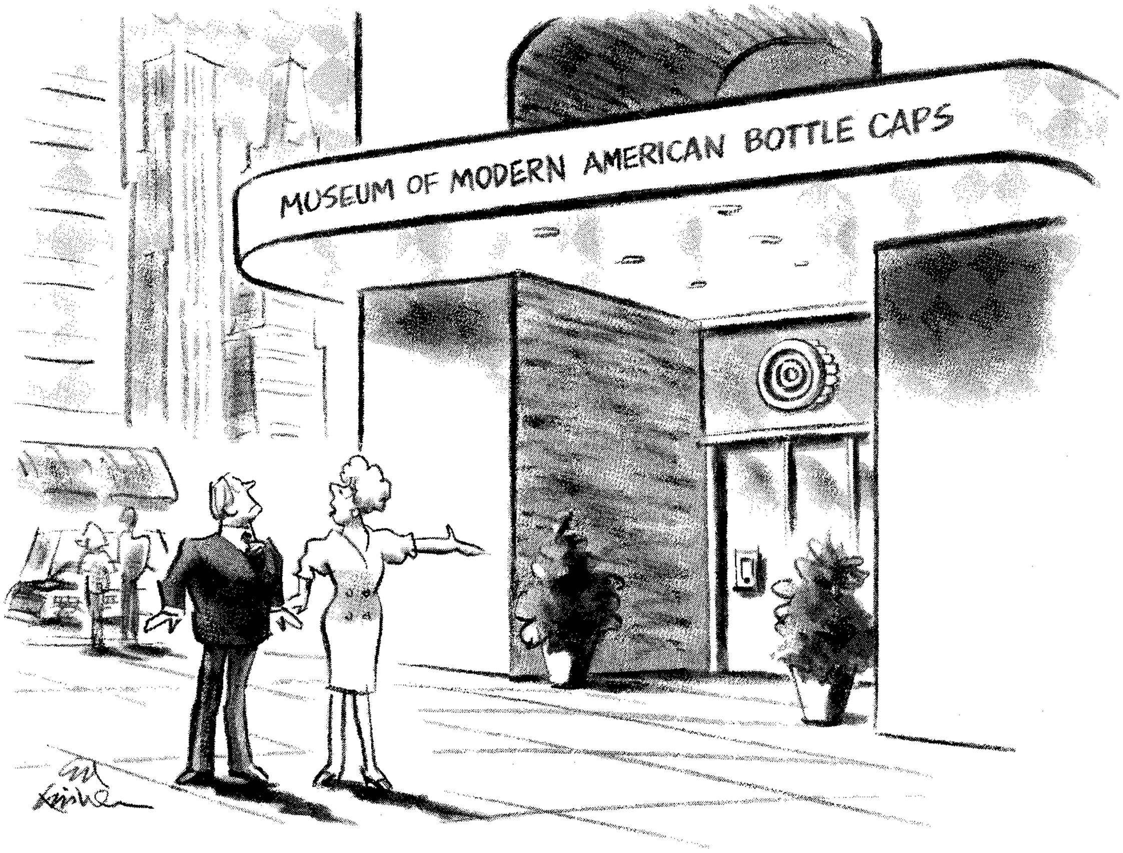
And yet she abets her metamorphosis,
Invests herself in voluminous costume
Jewels and shrill polyesters

—ambitious as a moth
To mime the dangerous leaf on which she rests.

—ERIC ORMSBY

• •

gone? The impressive, unsmiling man with his back against a wall had nobody to talk to, either. He might be one of the new poets Nat didn't know. Oughtn't two lost souls to make common cause against the world's rude good fortune? Nat took a swallow of champagne, turned to the unsmiling man, and said, "Before I moved to Connecticut, I couldn't have walked into a New York party without knowing one-third of the guests. Eight years change the scene. Or are these the rich people?"


MUSEUM OF MODERN AMERICAN BOTTLE CAPS

"See? While your unsurpassed collection of gum wrappers sits idle!"

The man did not smile, but, in response to an infinitesimal beeping, produced a walkie-talkie from behind his back, brought it to his lips, and, speaking low, said, "Not on the roster? What does she say her name is? Hold her there; I'll be right down. Excuse me," he said to Nathan, and made for the stairs.

Nat opened the nearest door into a mauve marble bathroom lit as with klieg lights. The stool was marble, the lid rosewood. Nat sat on it and sipped his champagne. The flusher was a 14k. dolphin.

Nathan walked down a stairway, looked through a glass wall, and here they all were—the beautiful women, the famous people—Q and X and Y, and Winterneet. Nathan put his face to the glass; he knocked on the glass. Winterneet's shoulder was to Nathan. Winterneet was talking with two beautiful women—one black on black, one white and gold, both sweet and twenty. The black one had eyes so lustrous they looked as if they had been shined to a high gloss with an extra layer of polish. The other one's smooth, pale hair was cut very short and ruler straight and swung in a single movement with the movement of her head. Her head kept moving, right on the other side of the glass, on a level with Nathan's eye. Nathan could not hear what Winterneet was saying that made the two beautiful women open their mouths. They laughed with their tongues, with their white teeth. Now Nathan saw, behind the glass, in the far corner, Nancy laughing with Barret Winburg.

And here came the young person with the clipboard, calling Mr. Nathan C. Cones. "Is Mr. Cones here, please?"

"*Cone*," said Nathan. "Nathan *Cone*."

"Dinner is served," said the girl. "Alice is going to usher you." It was the golden one. She took Nathan's arm, and Nathan experienced a small thrill and a small horror. He thought, I'm not up for this. This needs preparation.

Young Alice hurried Nathan along at a smart pace. Nat felt himself galumphing beside her, glimpsed the pure throat, the cheek outlined with a finely furred halo of light. Don't, prayed Nathan Cone, let me fall in love between here and— "*Where*," he asked the girl, "are you taking me?"

"Your table."

"Quick, quick! Tell me what they're going to do to me."

"They have one prize-winner for every table of twelve. Your hostess is Madame Forage."

"Wait one little old moment," said Nathan. "Is this a fund-raiser, or what?"

"I guess maybe that's how they pay for the prizes for next year? Each table," the girl continued, speaking backward as she preceded him up yet another stair, "has got a theme, a color scheme, and a logo. Your hostess is French, so you're red-white-and-blue, and your logo—"

"Don't tell me! Wait wait wait wait wait wait. I got it! The Eiffel Tower!"

"Right!" said Alice.

"I'm not sure," worried Nathan, "that there's anything left of my poor old French!"

"She's deaf anyway. But!" said Alice. "On your other side! *You* get to sit next to Betsy Morrowell!"

"I do?" said Nathan. "Who is Betsy Morrowell?"

"Betsy Morrowell!" said Nathan's

usher. "You don't know Betsy Morrowell? You don't watch TV?"

"Sure I do," said Nathan, who didn't want to sound like a prig.

"You don't watch 'Betsy's Bazaar'? It's been around for absolutely ever! I used to watch it when I was a child!"

"That long!" said Nathan.

"My mom used to let me watch her with my supper."

"Brief me! What's it about?"

"It's about this woman. Her husband gets sent to I guess someplace in Arabia, as an ambassador or something. Betsy gets bored with just ordering servants around, so she sets up a booth in the bazaar. And all the things that happen every week with different tourists."

"I think . . . I think I do remember," said Nathan.

THEY stepped out into a dazzle of flowers, festoons of light. A little orchestra played Handel. Water music. Way across the black river moved the lights of New Jersey on the left and Manhattan's West Side on the right. Alice walked Nathan through a group of young mimes. One knelt and bent her charming head over Nathan's hand; one threw a garland of flowers around his shoulders. "Thank you! Thank you!" Nathan said to them. He saw people rise from around a great table, turn toward his approach. They applauded. Nathan, who had meant to continue cool and snotty to the end, felt a small constriction in his throat. Out of the red centerpiece grew the Eiffel Tower made of white sweetheart roses and blue satin ribbon. They were all seating themselves. The card at Nathan's place read "NATHAN C. CONES." "Well, this is all very brilliant!" Nathan said to the noble-looking, very old woman on his right. He offered to assist her liver-spotted, gnarled, beringed hands in the unwrapping of the red-white-and-blue favor: she held up a lipstick in the shape of an Eiffel Tower. She pointed to the favor on Nathan's golden plate. He unwrapped an Eiffel-shaped mechanical pencil with a little lever that could make it write in blue and in red. The large, blond young male on Madame's other side was shouting French into her ear, and she turned toward him.

Nathan was grateful to young Alice. He could imagine himself asking his partner on the left, "We've met, haven't we?" She did look faintly—she looked really very familiar. "Did you and I go to Music and Art together?" he might have asked her. "No? Kenyon College? . . . Not Kenyon. Have you been to Concordance?" She was a good-looking, bright red-headed woman between twenty-eight and fifty, with powerful jaws and more teeth than ordinary people carry inside their mouths. It was a brave and competent face. And now Nathan perfectly remembered watching her perform an athletic feat of slapstick. Nat remembered respecting—or, remembering, respected—the decades of work behind the mastery with which the woman had moved and mugged and spoken her silly lines. Here she sat, next to Nathan, and seemed not to be going to waste her smile on him or on his occasion. Nathan could imagine her life crowded with men and occasions. She had a right to look—irritated was what she looked, though not, probably, by him. Nathan didn't think she was sufficiently conscious of his person to be irritated by it. Nathan desired to impinge, to interpose himself between Betsy Morrowell's frown and the salad she was pushing round her plate with a desultory fork.

While his mind busied itself in the formulation of something clever and ever so mildly impertinent with which to startle Betsy Morrowell, his eyes had come to rest on his wife, Nancy, sitting on the far side of the Eiffel Tower. The man on Nancy's left had turned so completely toward her that his back was necessarily and completely turned against the overdressed woman on his other side, who looked cross, poor thing, unable to impinge.

Betsy Morrowell suddenly said, "I loathe mimes."

Nathan laughed. "I don't think," he said, "that I have ever met anyone with enough passion on the subject of mimes to loathe them!"

"So élite!" said Betsy Morrowell, showing all her teeth.

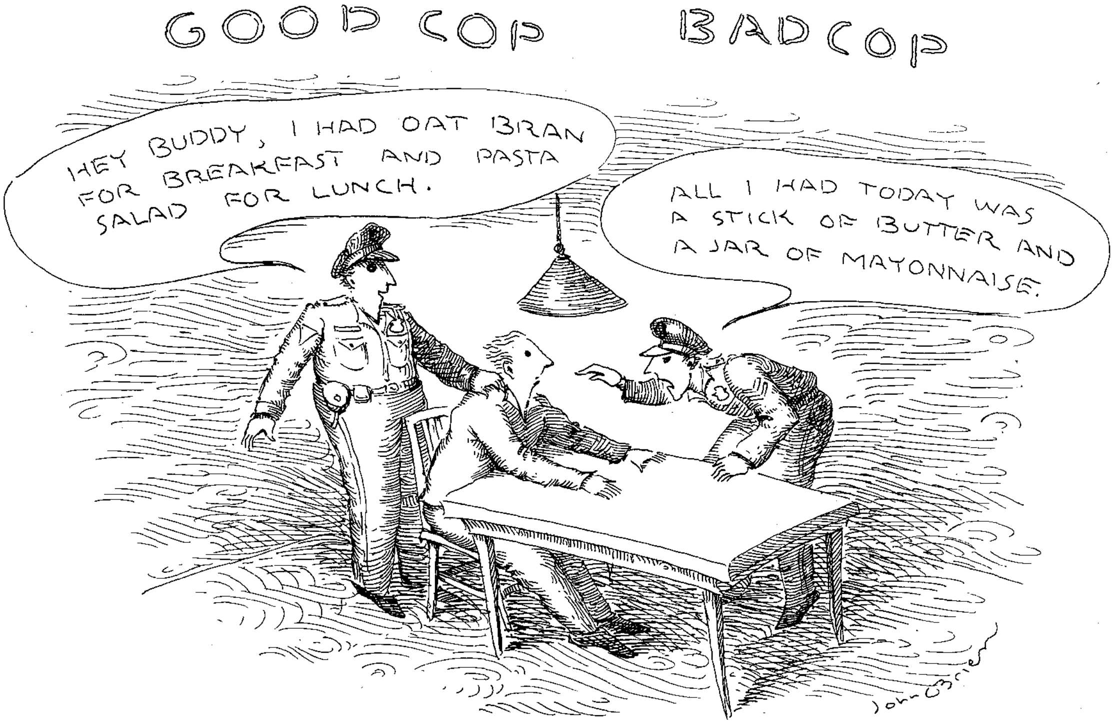
"Why should *their* being élite bother you?" Nathan asked her.

"Mime!" spat Betsy. "How many people know it *exists*?"

"I see! I see! I'll tell you what I see," said Nathan, and he was quite excited. "It's sort of wonderful! It bugs you that the few people who know mime exists don't know what you do. Just as it bugs me that the masses of people who watch you don't know I exist!"

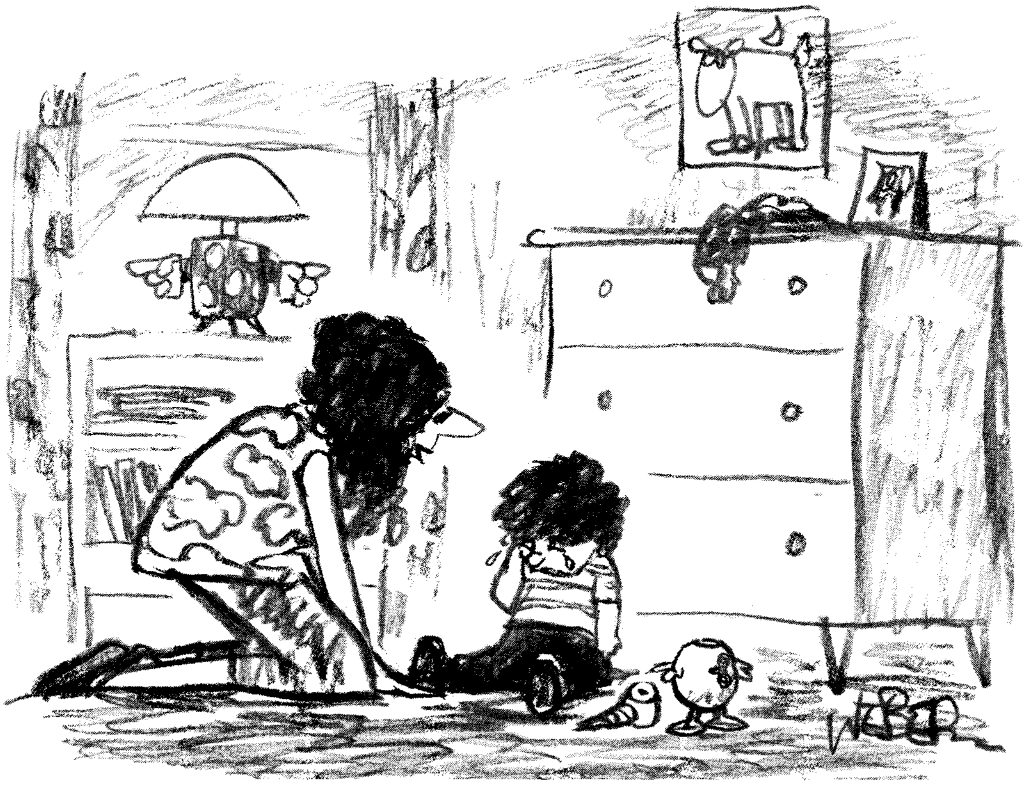
Now Betsy Morrowell looked at Nat. "What?" she said.

Nat saw Alice coming to fetch him and said, "I've got to go get me my prize. Don't


GOOD COP
BAD COP
HEY BUDDY, I HAD OAT BRAN FOR BREAKFAST AND PASTA SALAD FOR LUNCH.
ALL I HAD TODAY WAS A STICK OF BUTTER AND A JAR OF MAYONNAISE.

let it bug you! What's five thousand bucks in your world, eh?" And Nathan Cone and Betsy Morrowell looked past each other's eyes and their two smiles curled away from their teeth.

But the exchange had not been equal. Had Betsy Morrowell's manager, in the limousine, on the drive home, asked her, "Who'd you sit next to?" she would have frowned and said, "Some man, I think." But the prize-winning poet, Nathan Cone, mentioned to Celie at the institute Monday morning that he'd sat next to that woman on TV—what's her name? Morrowell? He said that he hadn't even known who she was. He said it again in the kitchen to Leslie's executive assistant, Betty, and again to Mrs. Coots, when she came to do out his office, and again at the Stones' dinner, Saturday.



"Try verbalizing it."

• •

LET Nathan explain and rant and demand to see the manager, the bank would not understand, would not cash, would not allow Nathan Cone to deposit a check for five thousand dollars made out to Nathan C. Cones. The manager advised him to return it to the organization and have them issue him another check with his name correctly entered. This Nathan did. He waited a week and a day and then he called. He explained about the check. The girl said, "Let me switch you to Accounts." Accounts had an English voice. "Mixed you up, did we? Oh dear!" She thought she remembered sending this check up to Mr. Block, who was out to lunch, but would call as soon as he got back if Mr. Cones would leave his number.

"Not Cones!" said Nathan. "*Cone.* I think maybe *I* better call *him.*" Nathan called and explained. Mr. Block said he would look into it, give him till Monday. "I'll even give him till Tuesday!" Nat said to Nancy, but Tuesday he was doing an out-of-town reading, Wednesday he plain forgot, and when he called Thursday Accounts said, "Fact of the matter is, half our files are on the twentieth floor. We're moving and everything's a bit of a shambles."

"What's your name, please?" it occurred to Nathan to ask her. It was Joyce. "Well, Joyce, you've been very helpful. Short of getting my money I like knowing what is holding it up."

"You give us a week to get ourselves sorted out," said Joyce.

"They're moving to the twentieth floor," Nathan reported to Nancy.

Nat gave them two weeks. Then he called and Accounts asked him what she could do for him. Nat said, "Could I speak to Mr. Block, please?" Mr. Block was in a meeting, but if Mr. Cones would leave his number Mr. Block would call as soon as he got out. "Could I speak to Joyce, please?"

"Joyce is no longer with us," said Accounts.

"What is your name?" Nathan asked the girl, and her name was Debby. Nathan explained to Debby, who said, "Hold on."

"What's happening?" Nancy asked Nathan.

"I'm holding on," said Nathan.

Debby came back and said, "We don't have a check for Nathan Cone. We have a check for Mr. Nathan C. Cones."

"Thanks," said Nathan. "I better speak to Mr. Block."

When Nathan called some minutes before five, Mr. Block had left for the day. The following morning Nathan logged the time, ten-fourteen, when Mr. Block had not yet come in, in the margin of the long poem on which he was at work. Later he kept a regular notebook with the day and hour when Mr. Block was lunching with a client; was out sick; had returned but was in conference in the president's office but would call back if Mr. Cones would leave his number.

"Cone Cone Cone Cone," shouted Nathan.

After lunching with the president on November 30th, at one-forty-four Mr. Block suffered a massive heart attack, and never regained consciousness.

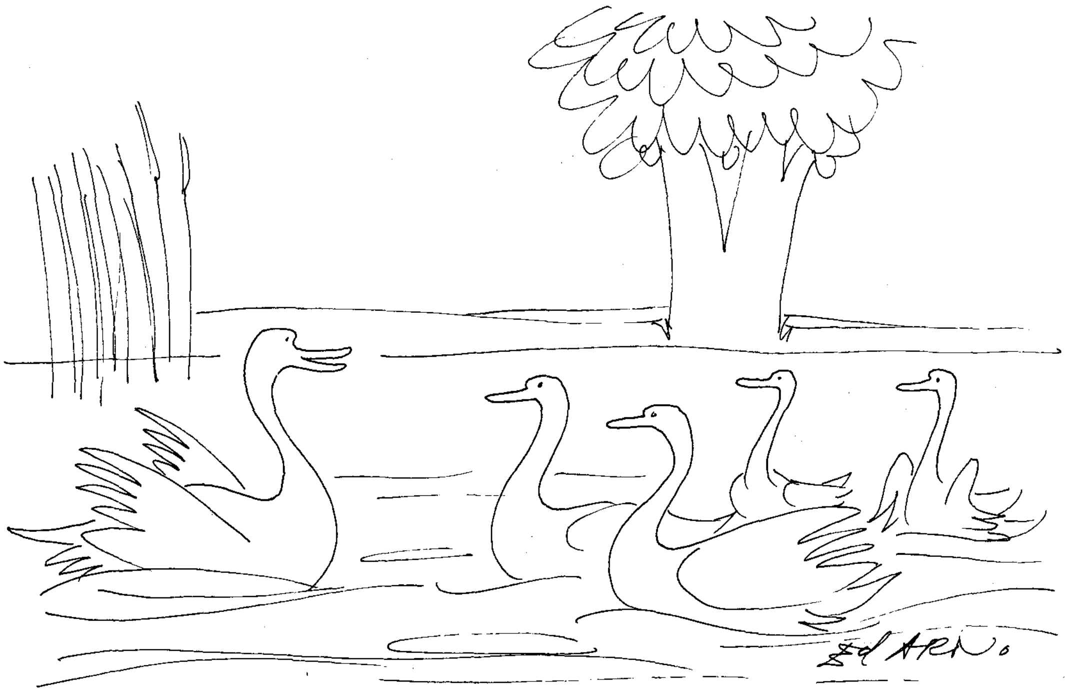
"Shit. Sorry," said Nathan. "Let me talk with Debby, please."

Debby had got married Saturday and taken time off to go on her honeymoon. "She won't be back till the New Year," said a Southern voice.

"What is your name?" asked Nathan.

"Miss Martin." Miss Martin said, "I know how these mixups go. The longer they go on, the more people get to mess up."

"It's become like a fever with Nathan," Nancy told Eliza Shakespere over lunch early in the spring. "He calls on the dot of ten and again at



"Let's hear it for Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky!"

• •

eleven and every hour on the hour."

"I could see," said Eliza, "how it might drive you nuts—not the money, but not being able to get something explained."

"That's what I'm afraid of," said Nancy, "that they've put him down for a nut."

Nathan called Winterneet and asked him if he had heard of a poet called Cones.

"No," said Winterneet. "Is he any good?"

"I think he won my Columbia prize," said Nathan.

"Talking of the Columbia prize," said Winterneet, "didn't poor Barret Winburg get one when you did?"

"Why 'poor' Winburg? Didn't he get *his* five thousand?"

"Didn't Winburg die?"

"Die! Winburg? How could he die, I mean . . ." Nathan meant, How could Winburg die and I not know! Nathan was tremendously upset.

Winterneet said, "I thought I remembered an obituary in the *Times* a couple of weeks back, but my memory is like the old gray mare: she ain't what she used to be."

"Nancy, what happened to my big old batch of *Timeses?*" hollered Nathan.

"Threw it out so you can start a new collection," shouted Nancy.

"Thanks a whole heap!" yelled Nathan. He called a friend on the *Book Review* and said, "Listen, Winburg didn't die, did he?"

"Not that I know," said the friend. "We ran a review of something of his last Sunday."

"Well, if you ran a review of Winburg, then Winburg is alive. Thanks."

Nathan's rampage had passed. The fever had burned itself out. He still called, perhaps once a month, and tried to explain to the several men and one woman who came and went in Mr. Block's old job. He chatted with the sympathetic Miss Martin, who was thinking of going back to school. Nathan encouraged her.

IN the years that followed, Nathan Cone published three more books and obtained, if not fame, a degree of eminence among his peers. He got grants of money. He slept with several women—one of them beautiful—mostly, but not always, during the times he and Nancy lived apart. These times grew fewer and briefer. The virulence of their angers and disappointments had not so much been resolved as retired. Nathan put on more weight, but his hair remained black. Then he became ill, and was very ill for some years, and got better, and had ten years in which he did what many thought was his best work. There were blessed months in which the long poem on which he had been stuck for half a decade spun itself out of a place in his head over which he had no say: everything he thought was relevant and dovetailed with everything he saw or heard anybody else say. He played words like a juggler, sentences rhymed in rhythms. Nathan had mastered—Nat Cone *owned*—the language that year before his illness caught up with him.

His head flat on the hospital bed, Nathan counted the poems he had got right in his first volume, and there were three, four, five, and half a dozen in his second. He had finished the long poem.

"What is it, Nat?" Nancy leaned her face down.

It was the first line of Part Three, over which he'd had a long altercation with his editor and had given in at last—honorably, he'd thought at the time, because she had convinced him. The resulting skipped beat had never ceased to bother Nathan and had twitched his lip.

"It wasn't my prize," Nathan thought he was saying, but he might not have made any sound, might not have moved his lips. Nancy straightened and turned back to what she had been saying to Leslie. Leslie sat on the other side of Nathan's bed, looking down at Nathan with grave and unaffected sorrow. That's for me, thought Nathan. They are sorrowful for *me*. Nathan's lips parted. "I wonder . . ."

"What, Nat?"

Nancy and Leslie leaned down their good faces.

". . . if I'm *the* poet."

"Which poet, Nat?"

"*The.*"

Nancy and Leslie waited for him to go on.

"Which is now moot." Nathan's teeth showed between his parted lips and he said, "Mooter, mootest."

—Lore Segal

REFLECTIONS

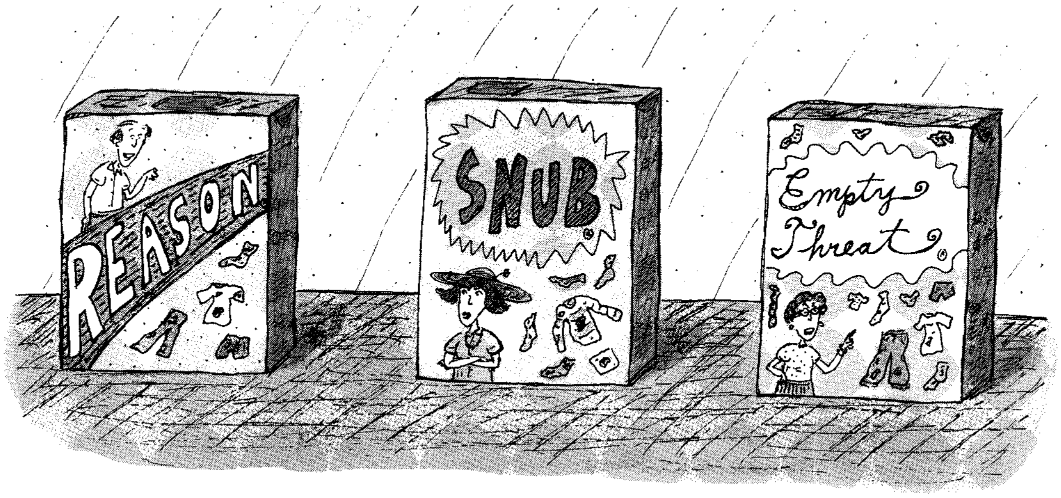
ENCOUNTERING THE COUNTRYSIDE—II

LANDSCAPES, in the view of some land-use experts interested in a regional approach to development, are now showing themselves to be a cake that you can eat and have, too. People can build on a landscape, that is, without eating away at it. All this seems to take, as the regionalists—an informal coalition of local government leaders, college researchers, environmentalists, and volunteers—have pointed out, is a simple, slight shift in the way people look at a place; then, almost abruptly, they can notice areas nearby that still present a countryside sense of kinship, or partnership, or community and companionability. They may find a sizable wilderness that has been flourishing just beyond their own field of vision since some early industries shut down, or a small valley of fields and meadows spared many decades ago by the farsightedness of a railroad president, or a miniature landscape, like the two-acre Klein farm in Queens—the last family farm in New York City, where a two-hundred-year-old tradition of working with the land has been held in place because one family has seen to it that agriculture remains a New York City industry.

People are now finding such a variety of opportunities for landscape connectedness that some regionalists have started to ask themselves why it is that a "both/and" sense about landscapes—the idea that places can change within an over-all context of continuity—is only now becoming widespread. These regionalists are beginning to think that the opposite point of view—an "either/or" approach to landscapes—was an early by-product of the environmental and social dislocations created during the first years of the industrial revolution, two hundred years ago, and that ever since, often without realizing it, Western Europeans and Americans have been carrying around with them as part of their mental baggage a deeply felt and despairing assumption that progress demands degraded surroundings. You put up with such surroundings as long as you have to, and you run away from them as soon as you can afford to, but, this belief has it, deteriorated landscapes and debased communities and bad smells and hideous noises are simply a given—something we all have to live with.

In a book called "Placeways: A Theory of the Human Environment," published in 1988, Eugene Victor Walter, a retired professor of sociology who taught at the Harvard Medical School and Boston University, looks at the interactions of people and places, and demonstrates that slums are a late-eighteenth-century phenomenon, brought on by the change of thinking that accompanied the industrial revolution: a new idea about places took over (a "new topistic ideal," he calls it), and it became acceptable "to segregate good and bad experience, locating wealth and illth in separate spaces." ("Illth" is his word for poverty and ill health.) Walter's work confirms earlier social-geography studies by the architect and planner Clarence S. Stein, who served as chairman of the New York State Commission of Housing and Regional Planning in the nineteen-twenties. In a 1925 article in *Survey Graphic* titled "Dinosaur Cities" Stein noted that New York City's first housing shortage and slum areas appeared in downtown Manhattan during the eighteen-thirties, when the city was in the middle of its first great development boom and population explosion, brought on by the opening of the Erie Canal, in 1825. Manhattan had a hundred and twenty-four thousand residents in 1820 and nearly triple that number in 1840, and the only response of the city's prosperous families to the new industries and the new immigrants was to move away, in a series of hops, one every generation, "proceeding up the length of Manhattan Island," an associate of Stein's wrote, "and submerg-

FAILED LAUNDRY DETERGENTS



The detergent that tries to persuade dirt that it really isn't wanted and should therefore leave.

The soap flakes that totally ignore dirt in the hope that it will go away.

The cleanser that tells dirt that unless it dissolves this instant there will be hell to pay.

THAT OCEAN

To love the scrubbed exactitudes
and the dimmer thing
that shivers at the brink.

There is, for example, the intimate rustle
of this woman's loose skirt, rayon,
as she hurries up a flight of stone steps
ahead of me: I slow down to relish
the faintly kissing sound of threads,
threads and flesh.

Or under a quilted bundling-up of cloud
a crow's broad black wing
palping the air: a dark assemblage
of force and voice and appetite and air,
a poise, a buoyancy, a beating
of bones light as breath, burning with purpose.

I despair of dealing sincerely
with the crow the brushings of desire
the woman's headlong motion the black farewell
steady caresses opening the air
inflamed soliloquy of the skirt
fragrant dialogue of flesh and texture.

Under this abrasive rain the grass,
dead all winter,
glows like straw-spun fairy gold
and two kinds of willow,
the local and the Babylonian,
flush and swell demented: one rises
in upright ecstasy, the other
overarched with grief; they occupy
the wary air with embering green bleached amber
and I hear the little singers
going mad again.

Or there is the absolute intimacy of eating.
To stand in the kitchen sniffing a bowl of duck fat
is to catch a scent the creature never had
of itself: it is offering up its essence
the way its neck feathers offered once
an iridescence to the eye one morning
as it swivelled in front of me on a flat
dazzle of water; and so
our own essence is by nature beyond us
and will be rendered after.

At uncommon intervals of attention we remember
ourselves at one with this other world: we
enter the network, a thicket of stillness
where in early spring a sapling of apple or cherry
sends out where it stands
inside the wire fence containing the graveyard
spray after spray of blossom
to stagger the eye at the solid gray threshold
of gravestones scoured by rain . . .

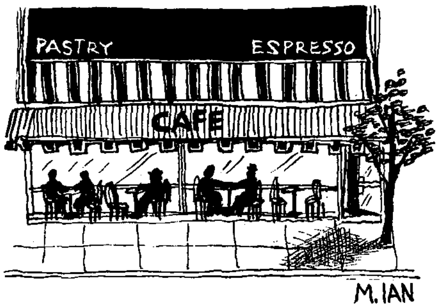
And this may be, you imagine, what
in the dream of good government
Lorenzetti's Peace is dreaming
where she lounges
relaxed, empty, ready for anything
—for the end of art, is it, or simply
listening into what might happen, the grasp
of dancers in a ring and gyring
underground? Through it all, all this
seething, I walk beneath a black umbrella,
behind a bright bead-curtain of rain.

—Eamon Grennan

• •

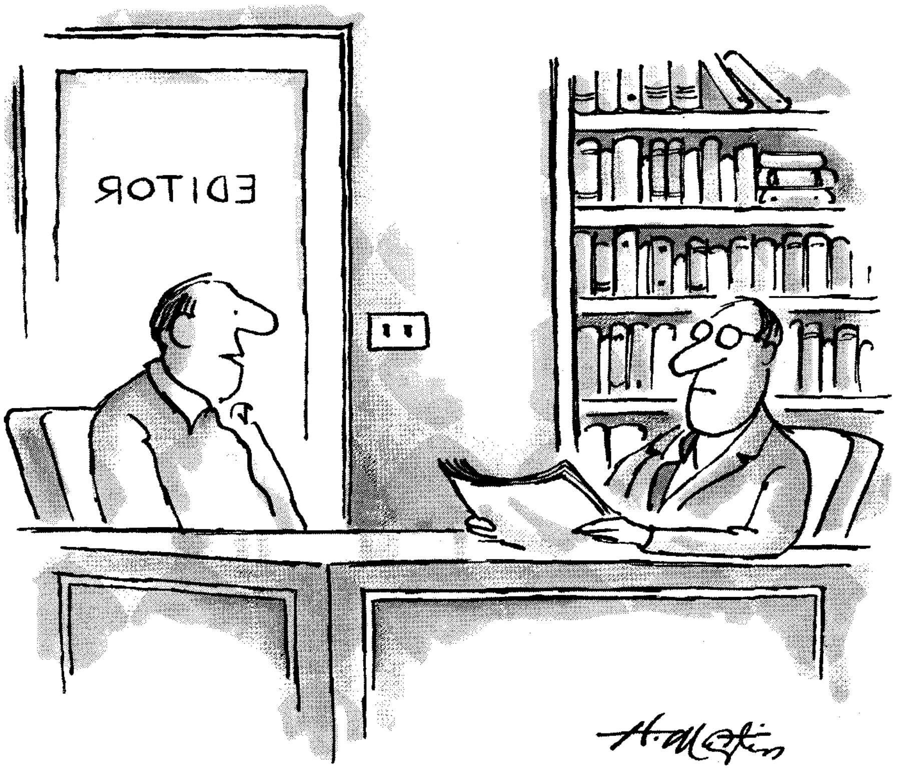
ing in time the quaint little colonial villages of Greenwich, Chelsea, and Harlem."

Imposing residential neighborhoods were thrown together—almost overnight, it seemed—on top of old fields and pastures. And only a few doors down from the rows of new houses you could expect to find elegant new stone churches: their serene, lofty spires created a new skyline, which looked as though it might last for centuries. Across the street from the houses and the churches you might find yourself stepping into a meticulously maintained new private park, such as St. John's Park (close to where the entrance to the Holland Tunnel is now) —"a spot of Eden loveliness and exclusiveness," as it was called in the eighteen-forties. That park was enclosed by a cast-iron fence, laid out with gravel paths, and planted with flower beds and specimen trees, which, according to Charles Lockwood, a New York architectural historian, included catalpas, cottonwoods, horse chestnuts, and silver birches. But such neighborhoods proved ephemeral, no more than elaborate tent camps along an inexorable and restless flight to the north: in 1866, Cornelius Vanderbilt bought St. John's Park for a railroad freight depot, and today all traces of that, too, have disappeared. But, as Clarence Stein pointed out, one of the consequences of running away from the problem rather than solving it was that New York "never caught up with its original shortage" of housing, and settled instead for a permanent state of crisis—a state that eventually began to seem a natural condition.



By now, people in this country have been subjected to so many landscape upheavals that the both/and idea about landscapes—that new uses can always find a way of working together with longtime partnership uses—may sound at first like wishful thinking or, at best, a dubious oddity of some sort, as if the Klein farm's linking together of modern New York and old rural Flushing were just a gimmick or a happenstance or a tourist attraction.

Recent work in a number of research fields, such as education and health



"I write for the age group thirty-seven to forty-six."

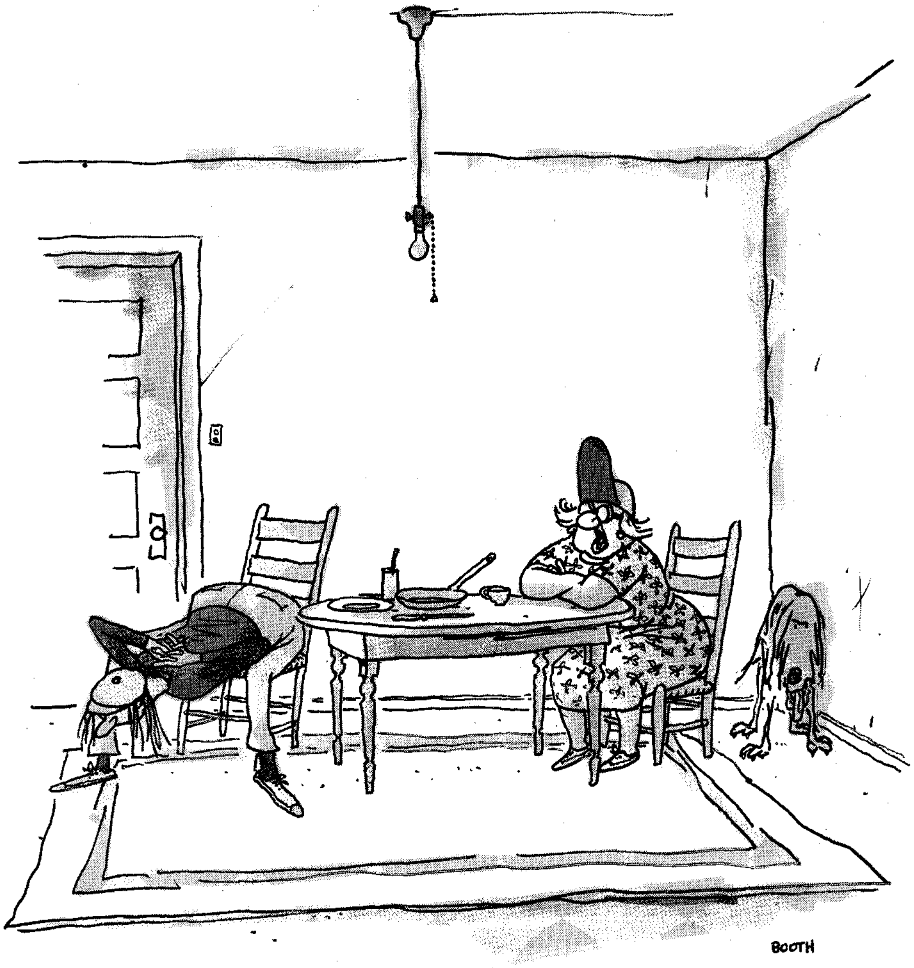
• •

care, has been advancing the regionalist approach by making it clear that certain essential human activities, including both learning and healing, can be enhanced when they take place in a setting that offers people countryside connections in addition to the support systems already in place. By the early nineteen-nineties, it will be possible to see what some familiar small-scale institutional settings will look like once they've been recountrified, so to speak. In some ways, oddly, they will resemble certain very early photographs of New York City, taken in the mid-eighteen-fifties. In England, a three-year-old national research program—the Learning Through Landscapes project—is under way to investigate how schools can restructure paved and windswept schoolyards to give them a countryside look and so provide "a complete environment for learning." The idea is that "the landscape in which the school stands . . . can provide a rich and stimulating resource and setting . . . for learning and teaching."

The study is based on a number of modern research findings, such as a UNESCO survey of children's needs, which was written about by the late urban planner Kevin Lynch, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Lynch was the first person to write about mental maps and landscape connectedness, and he was able to show that people's interior pictures of their surroundings grow more vague and unreliable when connectedness is taken away from them. In the UNESCO study, summarized in the book "Growing Up in Cities," Lynch compiled interviews with children from Argentina, Australia, Mexico, and Poland about their reactions to their surroundings, and found that no matter where they came from—it might be an inner-city neighborhood, a provincial capital, or a rural village—"the hunger for trees is outspoken and seemingly universal."

Another modern researcher, Colin Ward, the education officer for the Town and Country Planning Association, in London, has written that "the rural needs of the urban child are not just the sights of the farm or the pleasures of running untrammelled through the woods or exploring the country park. They include vital personal experiences and discoveries like silence, solitude, and the sensation of utter darkness." Neglecting children's rural needs, according to Roger Hart, director of the Children's Environments Research Group at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, can impair their healthy development as adults. "Part of being a responsible adult is having a sense of responsibility for the environment," he says. "And you can only care for something you've grown to feel a part of."

The Learning Through Landscapes project also represents, according to some observers, part of a belated attempt to put into practice a previously ignored countryside component of the educational teachings of the nineteenth-century German educator Friedrich Froebel, who is best remembered in this country as the inventor of the kindergarten—"an environment in which children grew freely, like plants in a garden," he said. Although in Prussia in the eighteen-fifties kindergartens were banished for nine years as subversive institutions, they have since flourished throughout the world—without, for the most part, a countryside setting. But, according to Froebel, children need more than toys, games, music, dedicated teachers, and a pleasant classroom in which to develop their intellects and their feelings. In Froebel's formulation, which was based in part on the many days he spent outdoors as a child—his stepmother had no time for him—people are created both as wholes and as parts; that is, they have to learn how to function both as separate individuals and as participants in larger patterns that include harmonious relationships with other people and with all of life. And, Froebel asserted, it was only outdoors that a person could learn empathy with the rest of creation: "On the first spring day [when] the shining sun beckons through the window and the clear blue sky is seen through it, the doors open as if of themselves," he wrote, and kindergarten children, once they are out on a nature walk, not only are immediately open to the "new observations and perceptions for which God's free world offers occasions" but also notice within themselves "increased feelings of life"—sensations that serve as powerful positive reinforcement for closely observing nature and opening up to it. Froebel also thought that nature study, and all the other pleasurable activities of kindergarten life as well, should form a part of the curriculum of higher schools: "Possibly our sons may



"True love, Leon, is not corporeal."

• •

thereby finish school life a year or two later; but is it not better that they should thereby attain a worthy aim than . . . an illusory one?"

Writing a few years after Froebel, Frederick Law Olmsted, according to his biographer Albert Fein, suggested that college campuses also needed to be thought of as a "total environment," and proposed that if campus buildings were set around a common open space, like the town green in a New England village, this would foster a social connectedness that would exert "an incalculable effect on future attitudes." By the time Olmsted began working on college designs—including fragrant and visually complex plantings in the grounds of Gallaudet University, in Washington, a college for deaf students—New York City had turned away from such notions, and Columbia College had been squeezed into a cluster of institutional buildings in midtown, on Madison Avenue. An old photograph I have seen shows the original, late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century campus of Columbia College when it was way downtown in Manhattan, a couple of blocks southwest of City Hall. In the picture, taken by a former president of the college in 1854, the trees are not in leaf, but you can still barely see the main building, because the elms on the green in front of the old structure are so thickly crowded together.

The ideas in a celebrated 1984 study by Roger S. Ulrich, a University of Delaware geography professor, "View Through a Window May Influence Recovery from Surgery," published in *Science*, have been incorporated into the design of a hospital in Newport, on the Isle of Wight, off the southern coast of England. Professor Ulrich, who is now at Texas A & M's College of Architecture, found that over a nine-year period gall-bladder patients who could see a cluster of trees instead of a brick wall outside their hospital window "had shorter post-operative stays" and "took fewer moderate or strong" painkillers. Richard Burton, who is one of the architects of St. Mary's, the new hospital on the Isle of Wight, had been asked by British health authorities to design a structure that had space for more art work and at the same time used less energy than conventional hospitals. One of his design solutions was to place the hospital in the middle of a large public park whose centerpiece is a duck pond fringed with willows. You can stand on a solarium balcony at the end of one of the wards and look down two stories and out at a lawn and the pond, with a few willows, a reed bed, and a couple of old oaks and pine trees nearby. Raising your eyes, you can see beyond the houses and warehouses of a Newport suburb in a small valley to hilltop fields, woods, and pastures on the horizon, two miles away.

An old photograph of the original site of New York Hospital in Manhattan, in what is now a warehouse and office district northwest of City Hall, shows a building set far back from the street, behind a large lawn and two stately rows of elm trees. Lying in bed, you can't see many trees from the high-rise windows of the current New York Hospital, on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, but the hospital does operate a separate psychiatric hospital, in White Plains, which is in a two-hundred-and-thirty-acre park with landscaping designed by Olmsted. The future of the Olmsted landscape is now in doubt, though: the hospital has announced that it wants to develop most of the property in order to have more money for health care.

The city of Boston has approached the Isle of Wight model of health care, but there's still something missing: In the nineteen-seventies, under a program called Urban Wilds, Boston began protecting undeveloped city lots that had long been untouched and had remained often spectacular natural areas—woods, wetlands, meadows, rock outcroppings. More than nine hundred acres have since been permanently set aside as public open space—a figure that may one day be expanded to include a lush hilltop meadow in Mission Hill, where, behind a profusion of wildflowers, you can just make out the distant, shimmering tops of Boston's downtown skyscrapers. This meadow is close to, but not next to, New En-

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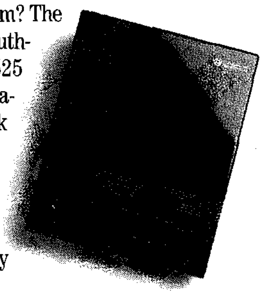

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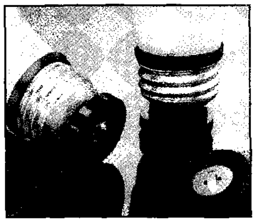

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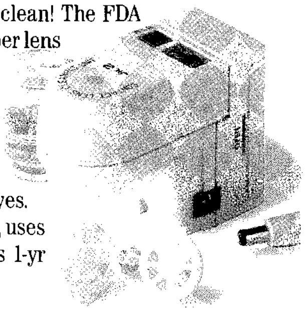

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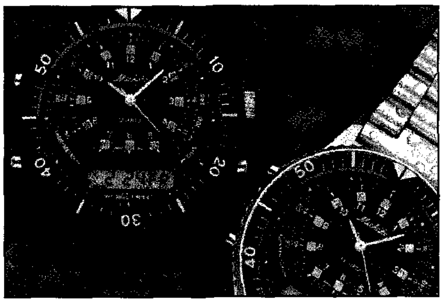
A WATCH FOR ALL REASONS



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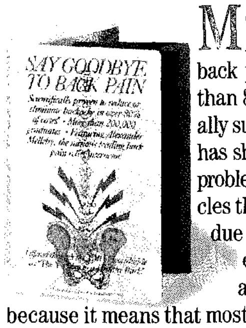

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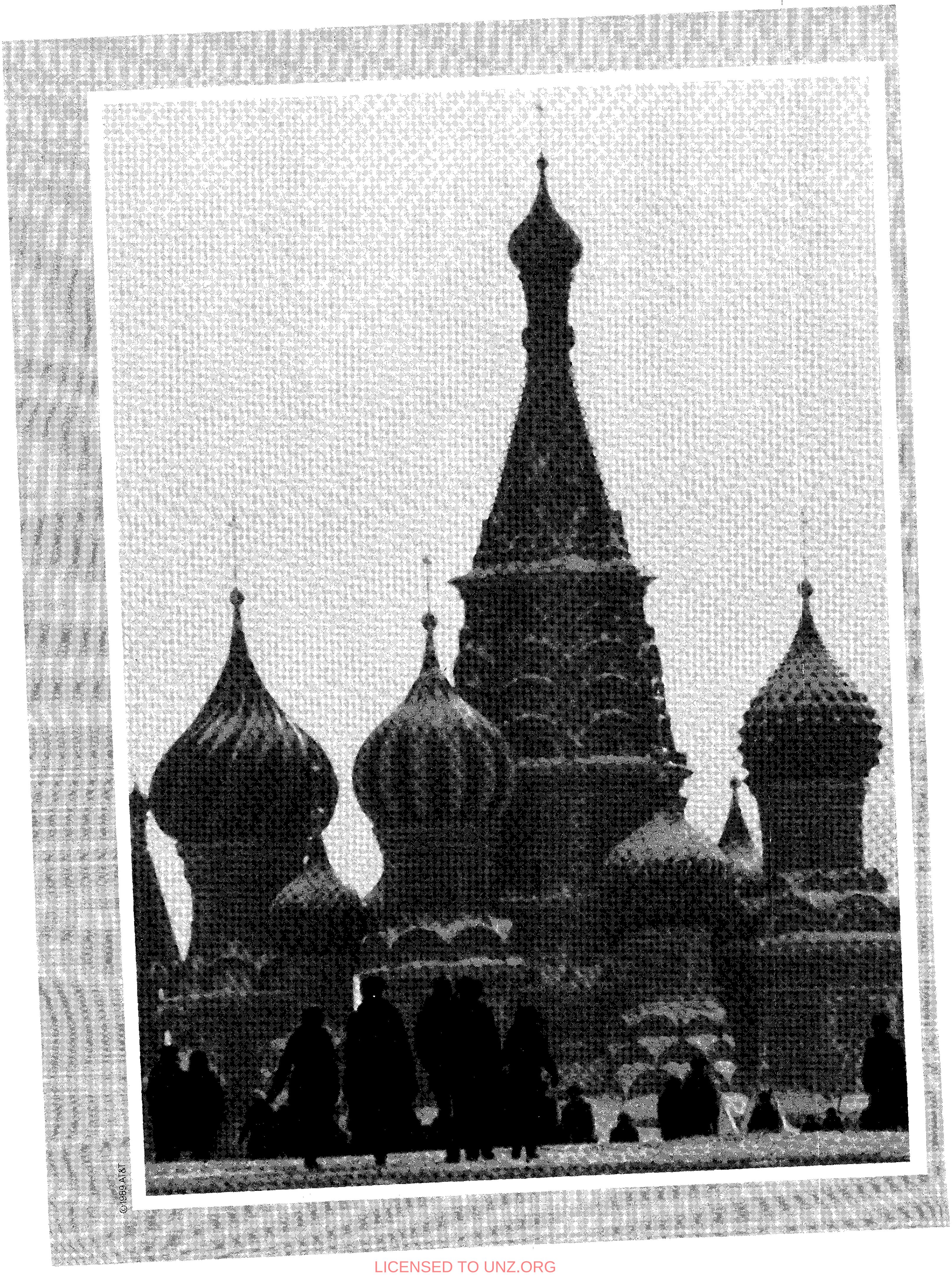

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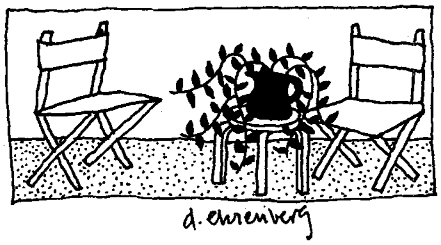
gland Deaconess Hospital, which is on the same hilltop but has no such view, because what was once half of a much larger meadow—the half closer to the hospital buildings—has been paved over and surrounded by a chain-link fence, and now serves as the hospital's staff parking lot.

New work in the field of social medicine is beginning to discover further possible public-health connections of trees and meadows with human settlements; for instance, there is the idea of "the enabling environment," which Susan Toch, an environmental planner, defines as the unbreakable connection between the condition of the environment in an area and the well-being of the people who live there. As a graduate student at the University of Waterloo, in Ontario, Toch, who was one of the first researchers to look into this relationship, discovered during field work in the Île-de-France that health authorities should be able to set up a new generation of "integrated epidemiological studies." These studies, once completed, would link medical and ecological factors and would show direct spatial correlations between ecological damage, such as damage to lichens in the Île-de-France (lichens are sensitive to air pollution), and the specific illnesses people get, such as respiratory disease or cardiac distress.

Susan Toch says that while "the inherent links between medical and ecological information are rarely acknowledged," volunteer work she did in France with a local emergency medical squad showed her where integrated epidemiological studies of the area could begin to collect evidence: she found that local pharmacists often learned about new environmental problems long before the regional public-health officials did. Talking with small-town druggists, she discovered a new kind of early-warning system: when something gets into a town's water supply that can give people stomach aches, not every household will know right away that people are getting sick, or why, but within a single day the local drugstores will often be selling more than twice the usual number of stomach-settling pills and syrups, and the druggists will have started putting together a picture of the problem. Toch says that, just as canaries used to be taken down into coal mines to act as "indicators" for coal gas, because the birds would be affected by it long before the miners could tell that anything was wrong, these days we have to be our own canaries, and the people in the French towns have become "indicators" for a problem with the water supply. In other words, a major part of the business of taking care of the environment has to do with learning how to keep at least one eye on ourselves.

SOME of today's regionalists, among them Professor Robert D. Yaro, the director of the Center for Rural Massachusetts, which is a research institute at the University of Massachusetts—Amherst, think that there's a fourth reason (beyond the urgency of the moment, the opportunities at hand, and the evidence from related fields) that small regionalist projects can find a welcome in this country in the middle of the largest national development boom in American history. That is that such projects are not doing anything innovative, after all; they're only resuming work, on some jobs and some principles that were fully spelled out in "The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning," a recently rediscovered and now much pored-over book by an American forester and planner named Benton MacKaye, which was first published sixty years ago. In the nineteen-thirties, MacKaye was a co-founder, with Aldo Leopold and several other conservationists—many of whom had served in the United States Forest Service—of the Wilderness Society, a nonprofit group set up in Washington to promote wilderness preservation of federally owned forest and other land. And a dozen years earlier, in New York, he had joined with Lewis Mumford and Clarence Stein and a few other planners and architects who had taken an early interest in land-use reform to set up the Regional Planning Association of America, an informal clearing house for new thinking, which incubated many of the land-reclamation and social-development policies later put into effect by the New Deal, such as flood control, rural electrification, and the reforestation of logged-over mountain tracts by the Civilian Conservation Corps.



Until only a few years ago, when some of the new regionalists in this country began prowling the stacks of local libraries in search of old copies of "The New Exploration," MacKaye (the name rhymes with "high") was remembered primarily as the father of the Appalachian Trail, which in 1937 became the first two-thousand-mile-long hiking path in the United States and the first interstate ridgeline greenway park: a linear inland strip of wilderness that parallels the Atlantic Ocean and runs from mountaintop to mountaintop down the East Coast. The trail begins on the top of Mt. Katahdin, in Maine, and eventually climbs to the top of Springer Mountain, in Georgia, after crossing through fourteen states.

Two more long-distance interstate trails are now being blazed through wilderness lands—these in the Western United States. The Pacific Crest Trail, twenty-five hundred and sixty miles long, is almost a mirror image of the Appalachian Trail; it's a ridgeline path along the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada that parallels the Pacific Ocean and extends from Canada to Mexico. And the Continental Divide Trail, through the peaks of the Rockies, will eventually provide a hiking path of more than three thousand miles between Canada and Mexico, once the Forest Service and other groups select and mark a route for the Colorado–New Mexico–Mexico segment of the trail. All three trails are now National Scenic Trails, and thus part of the national-park system. And two years ago the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, a bipartisan panel established by the Reagan Administration to think about the country's recreational needs in the first decades of the twenty-first century, proposed creating a national "green mosaic" of hiking trails, jogging trails, bicycle paths, bridle paths, and scenic highways and byways—a "network of greenways across the country" that would link every community to all the state parks, state forests, national parks, and national forests in the country, and "tie this country together with threads of green that everywhere grant

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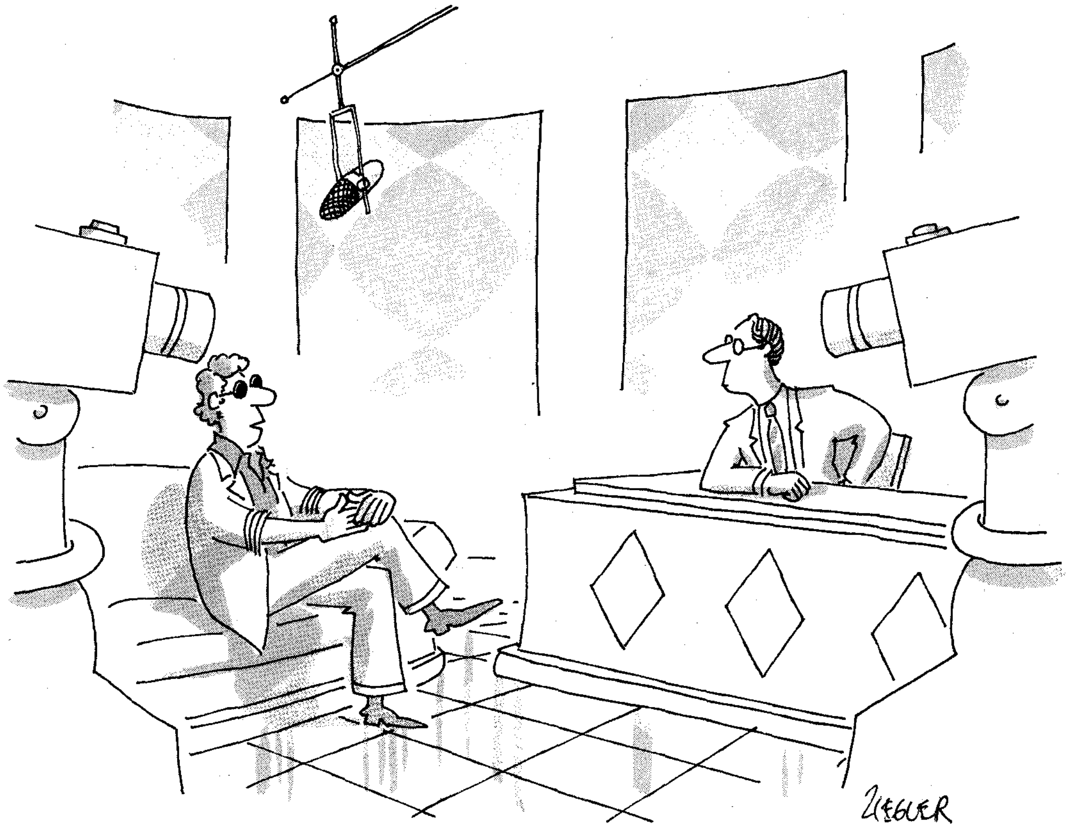

"Haven't you noticed, Ned, how everyone's films are getting shallower except mine?"

• •

us access to the natural world." The commission also proposed setting up a new national outdoor trust fund authorized to spend up to a billion dollars a year to help bring the green mosaic and other recreation projects into being. The commission's chairman, Governor Lamar Alexander, of Tennessee, wrote to President Reagan that he foresaw, as he tried to look ahead, "a prairie fire of concern and investment" to preserve and create outdoor opportunities for the next generation of Americans.

Since MacKaye's proposal for an Appalachian footpath is still less than seventy years old—he first mentioned the idea in an essay published in 1921—the recent national embracing of his plan might make him seem a worthy minor prophet whose mission has come to fulfillment in an unusually short time. But, from the first, in every paper and book he wrote, MacKaye was really talking about something larger, about landscape connectedness and the role it can play in a special kind of enabling environment. For him, making wilderness hiking a regular part of American urban life was simply one element in a new national undertaking that could diminish some of the impact of the automobile; halt the headlong, panicked flight from blight; and, at the same time, reinvolve all modern Americans in the patterns of kinship and partnership and neighborly and intellectual connections that can operate in what he called "three basic 'elemental environments,' ": natural landscapes, working landscapes, and cities—or, to use his terminology, "The Primeval," "The Rural," and "The Urban."

And there was more than this. In "The New Exploration" MacKaye talked again and again, in almost quantifiable terms, about the effect that making or breaking daily landscape connections inevitably has on the lives of large populations. To paraphrase MacKaye's underlying formula slightly, what he saw happening could be expressed as "three minus one equals zero" but "one plus one plus one equals four"; that is, people's lives are immediately diminished whenever their connections with any one "elemental environment" are blurred or broken—because, he said, the "personality" of a place evaporates whenever "unthinking" development covers an area with "structures whose individual hideousness and collective haphazardness present that unmistakable environment which we call the 'slum.' " He went on to explain, "Not the slum of poverty, but the slum of commerce. . . . These souls live all in a single environment: not city, not country, but wilderness—the wilderness not of an integrated, ordered nature, but of a standardized, unordered civilization." MacKaye's prose is always pungent: "A rootless, aimless, profoundly disharmonized environment" is his description of standardized development.

This is the immense threat—that when we lose one set of connections we end up severed from all connectedness. "Together," MacKaye says, the three elemental environments "seem to form, when normally developed, a complete and rounded external world adapted to man's psychologic needs." But "depletion in any one of them means a corresponding depletion in man's life." MacKaye also points out an unsuspected quality inherent in all properly connected places. When all three of the elemental environments are readily available to people, he says, they form the terrestrial basis of "a fundamental world of man's needs as a cultured being"—a basis that makes possible a kind of collective forethought, or anticipation of the future, which is otherwise not ordinarily available. "A higher estate in human development," MacKaye calls this at one point, and he also refers to it as "a gradually awakening common mind."

The promise here is that people properly grounded in a complete and rounded environment could begin to get a better feeling for the day-to-day aspect of the many multigenerational decisions in modern life—those actions we initiate which pile up assets or debts for our children and grandchildren. If our own landscapes could help us live more lightly, it would be easier for us to feel the weight we were piling on the backs of people who will be arriving here in a few years. Human consciousness, with its multiplicity of awarenesses, evolved in surroundings that provided several kinds of connectedness to the "common mind." We're only now learning that there's yet another, concealed danger in indiscriminately altering the environment: by inadvertently severing connectedness and thus dulling some of our own awareness, we can begin systematically ignoring our surroundings without quite realizing that our alertness has faltered; we can damage natural systems; we can put our own safety and health in peril.

For MacKaye, thinking about connectedness evoked regional thinking, because he thought you would need to have a piece of land at least thirty miles by forty in order to set up an urban area, a rural area, and a wilderness area big enough to function on a sound economic and environmental footing; he called such an area a "regional city." And a transregional project such as the Appalachian Trail was more than just a delivery system that would bring countryside connections to your front door and link small regions together. It would be an underpinning for all the landscapes of—in this case—the Eastern United States: a framework that would give stability to local wilderness areas and partnership landscapes, and would also nourish and replenish them, by serving as a source of supply. Lewis Mumford wrote in 1962 that it was instantly apparent to the regional planners of the early nineteen-twenties that the original Appalachian Trail proposal was a "decisive departure" from previous plans for paths and trails. "I well remember the shock of astonishment and pleasure that came over me when I first read this proposal," Mumford wrote. MacKaye had "conceived this new trail as the backbone of a whole system of wild reservations and parks, linking together by feeder trails into a grand system, to constitute a reservoir for maintaining the primeval and the rural environment at their highest levels."

MacKaye realized early in his life that landscape connections are often unwittingly severed by major technological innovations, and that transportation systems in this country always serve two functions: they move goods from place to place, and they are put to use by America's internal immigrants

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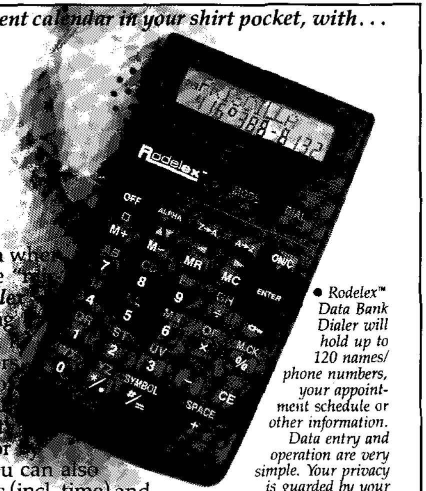

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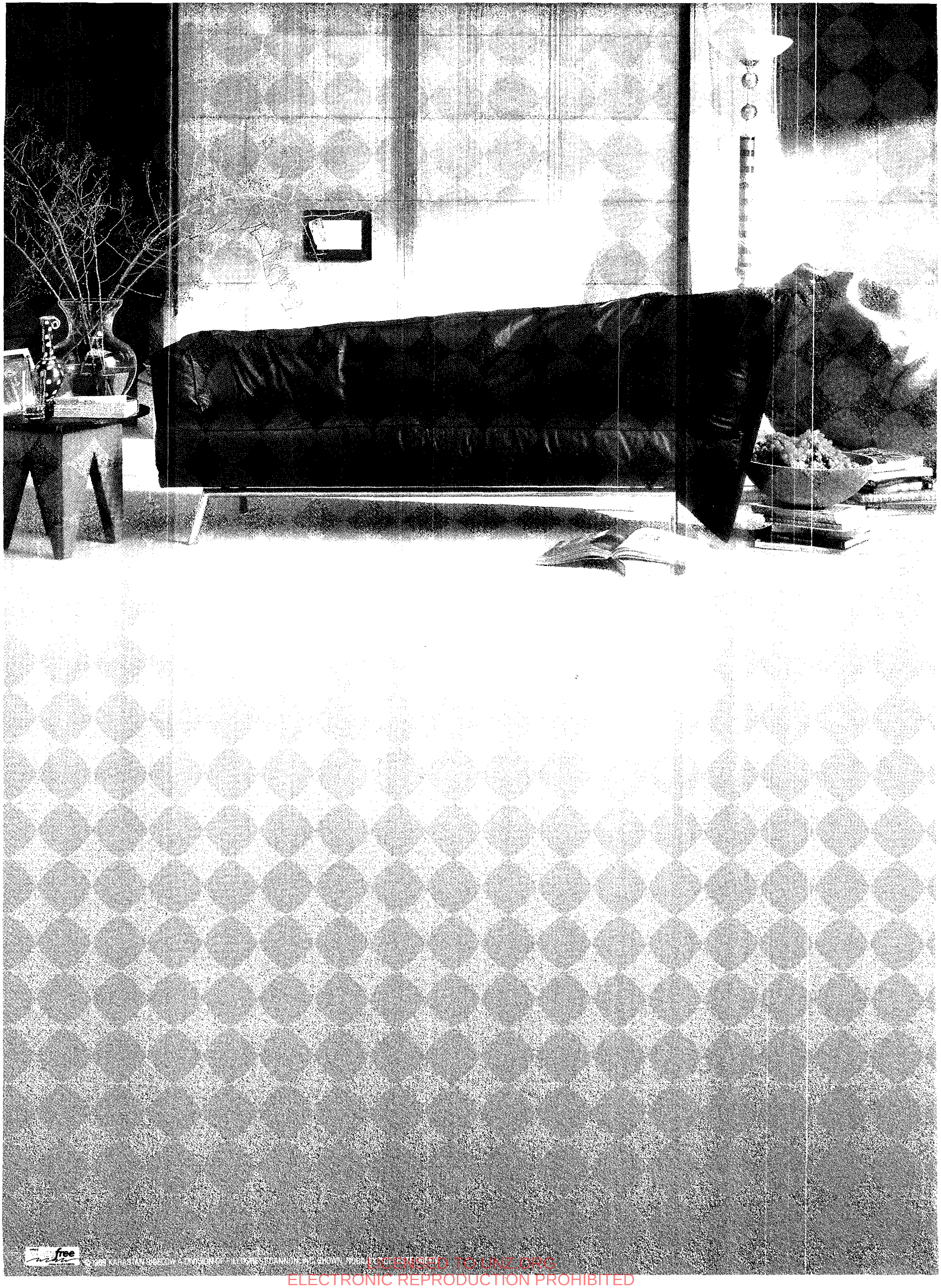
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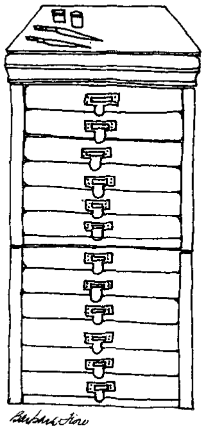
—the people fleeing the approach of industry and slums by moving to new neighborhoods. Long before the first interstates were built, he could see that automobiles would have a decisive effect on the dynamics of urban flight, because, unlike canal boats and railroad trains, they could head in almost any direction. In one of his most memorable phrases, MacKaye declared that in the twentieth century "Pygmies have become centaurs"—meaning that people pulling up stakes could now range far and wide. "The weakling man, seated in his motor car with hand on wheel and foot on lever, becomes a locomotive." But the Appalachian Trail, together with similar transregional dikes and ramparts of countryside that might be created in the future, could be thrown across the path of the motorcars. "Here is the barrier of barriers," MacKaye wrote about the Appalachian Trail, within a "world-empire of industrial and metropolitan upheaval." It was, he said, "the backbone levee of the whole Atlantic border from Canada to Georgia."

The countryside, in other words, could rescue the cities, because a reshaped countryside would now be an urban design, too—a means, Mumford wrote in his 1962 essay, "of designing a better urban pattern for the flow of population that was already making the whole coastal area from Boston to Washington into a formless 'conurbation,' as Patrick Geddes had long ago called it, before Jean Gottmann, in a recent study, gave it the less accurate name of 'megalopolis.' " As MacKaye saw it, you changed people's mental maps by first altering their physical maps: the partly completed Appalachian Trail of the nineteen-twenties had "already laid, both on the ground and in the public mind, the thread on which to weave . . . the main open way across the metropolitan deluge issuing from the ports of the Atlantic seaboard," he wrote, and "this open way, when once it really opens, would form the base throughout eastern populous America for controlling the metropolitan invasion."

For some of today's regionalists, to read MacKaye and then find on a road map of the Eastern United States the dotted red line of the Appalachian Trail, connecting dozens of national forests, state forests, and state parks, and even two national parks—Great Smoky Mountains National Park, in Tennessee and North Carolina, and Shenandoah National Park, in Virginia—"makes it impossible for any of us to feel like a pioneer," one of them told me recently. He went on, "But that is more than made up for by finding ourselves to be members of an established American profession. Sometimes I think the only way to describe MacKaye's impact is to rewrite the Johnny Appleseed story, because I get a feeling that's almost like growing up in a country where no one has ever even heard of apples, and then, when news about apples finally makes its way to you, you look outside and see that there are apples hanging outside your window, ready to eat. And then you find out that two generations ago someone came through the area planting a few apple trees, which you had always assumed were just ornamental shrubs. And then you see that there's a package with your name on it, left behind by the apple planter, and inside are more seeds, a couple of shovels, and detailed instructions for setting up an orchard."

MacKaye never thought of himself as an innovator. In "The New Exploration" he wrote that the pattern of the regional city "is no invention of mine nor of any other single human brain" but "is merely an attempt at the restoration, and extension through modern instrumentalities, of the basic scheme of regional development, which arose naturally and spontaneously in the endeavor to adapt a given American setting to certain fundamental human desires." And, quoting an early essay by Mumford, he reminded his readers that in the years before nineteenth- and twentieth-century transportation schemes set off wave after wave of urban flight regional development had normally been of service to "man's evolution" by creating for people a connectedness that widened their "mental and spiritual horizon." The public value of regions had increased at the same rate as private-property values. By 1850, according to Mumford, "the communities that were planted on the seaboard and up the river valleys during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries . . . had achieved their maximum development; they had worked out a well-rounded industrial and agricultural life, based upon the fullest use of their regional resources through the water-wheel, mill, and farm, and they had created that fine provincial culture, humbly represented in the schools, universities, lyceums, and churches, which came to a full efflorescence in the scholarship of Motley, Prescott, Parkman, and Marsh, and in the literature of Emerson, Thoreau, Melville, Whitman, and Poe."

Because MacKaye made it clear that regions can begin to work as enabling environments only when all three of the elemental environments that serve to define a region can offer a well-rounded range of public values, some regionalists in this country now see reason to pay special attention to America's working landscapes. First of all, to play catch-up—since working landscapes in the nineteen-eighties are often the environments that have the least protection and are disappearing the most rapidly. New York State, for example, has recently lost vast amounts of farmland; close to a million acres went out of production just between 1982 and 1987. At the same time, city people have been rediscovering natural areas inside their own borders. In a new book called "Urban Wilderness: Nature in New York City," by Jean Gardner, with photographs by Joel Greenberg, there's a picture of tall evergreens, crisp, fresh-fallen snow, and a roaring waterfall; the picture turns out to be a contemporary view of the Bronx River.



"New York City has one of the most diverse natural environments of any American city," Gardner has said. On her master list of the "natural complexity" in the city are, among other features, a pine barren, a hemlock grove, estuaries, rivers, and even one of the highest elevations along the Atlantic coast (Todt Hill, on Staten Island). New York City now has more than nineteen thousand acres of parkland that are being officially preserved as wild countryside; in the nineteen-seventies, the ninety-one-hundred-acre Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, in southern Brooklyn and Queens, was turned over to the National Park Service and became part of the Gateway National Recreation Area; and then, in 1984, the city's Parks Department got into the wilderness business itself, setting up a new Natural Resources Group to develop management plans for seven thousand acres of undisturbed woods, wetlands, meadows, and meandering streams inside dozens of city parks in the five boroughs.

Wilderness areas are actually increasing in New York City. Last summer, Mayor Edward Koch and Henry Stern, the city's parks commissioner, created City Hall Meadow by personally scattering wildflower seeds on a small triangle of dusty land near the entrance ramps to the Brooklyn Bridge; and a New York State environmental-conservation program is now financing the efforts of a volunteer group devoted to restoring the most densely built-up section of the Bronx River's banks—several miles south of the waterfall. In a still more ambitious project, a Buffer the Bay program, launched in 1984 by the New York City Audubon Society, later joined by a national nonprofit land-conservation group named the Trust for Public Land, has targeted several broad, quiet tidal creeks and other natural areas around Jamaica Bay as new city parkland. These creeks were left out of Gateway for a variety of reasons, and if they could be added to the parkland in the city, says the Audubon Society's conservation-committee chairman, Albert F. Appleton, "These natural-habitat areas would become greenways that would bring Jamaica Bay across the Belt Parkway and into the neighborhoods of South Brooklyn and South Queens."

Hiking trails and bicycle paths—greenways of a more conventional sort—are also under construction in New York. The grandest of these is the Brooklyn/Queens Greenway, a forty-mile-long bicycle path and pedestrian path from the Atlantic Ocean to Long Island Sound. This is a project of the Neighborhood Open Space Coalition, an alliance of a hundred and twenty-five community-gardening and environmental groups in New York, and it has been designed as a ribbon of open space that will unite thirteen city parks, two botanical gardens, and several eminent New York City cultural institutions, including the New York Aquarium, the Brooklyn Museum, and Shea Stadium. The plan is getting a warm reception in New York; the city's transportation commissioner, Ross Sandler,

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says the completion of the greenway is now "a historical imperative," and a *News* editorial has called it "an urban version of the Appalachian Trail." Tom Fox, the executive director of the Neighborhood Open Space Coalition, says that the Brooklyn/Queens Greenway, which he would like to see completed by 1995, can increase the reach of existing open spaces in a way that will help millions of city people feel closer to the out-of-doors: half the population of New York lives in Brooklyn and Queens, but only nine per cent of Brooklyn, and only ten per cent of Queens, is parkland.

A third greenway system now being planned for New York—a project by the city Parks Department to restore bicycle paths along the Shore Parkway in Brooklyn and Queens—will eventually link the first two greenway projects by creating, at its eastern end, a fourth greenway, the Brooklyn/Queens South Shore Greenway, or Blue-and-Greenway, as Parks Department planners have nicknamed it. As currently proposed, the Blue-and-Greenway would be a bicycle path, running east and west, that would cross all the Buffer the Bay wilderness greenways extending north from Jamaica Bay. And, several miles to the west, the Shore Bikeway, which is being planned as the western extension of the Blue-and-Greenway, will meet up with the southern end of the Brooklyn/Queens Greenway on the boardwalk at Coney Island.

And even this isn't the end of it: Hooper Brooks, the director of a new Regional Open Space Program at the Regional Plan Association, which is a private, nonprofit planning agency in New York, is drawing up a "greenway framework" for the whole New York metropolitan area; it would take in, among other large-scale projects, the hundred-and-fifty-mile-long Hudson River Valley Greenway, which now has the sponsorship of Governor Mario Cuomo. One element of the Regional Open Space Program, a Palisades Conservation Plan, would be visible from New York City. It's a plan for a fifteen-mile-long greenway that will protect the cliffs along the Hudson River which cut through ten New Jersey towns just west of Manhattan. To make the Palisades Conservation Plan work, the Regional Plan Association is suggesting that all ten towns agree to two kinds of growth controls. First, no future structures built on the flats below the Palisades could ever obstruct any of the panoramic views you can get at the top of the cliffs: the Hudson River down below; the Manhattan skyline straight ahead; the open sky above it all. And, second, any new building put on the flats would have to preserve one of the feelings still available on the land down at the foot of the Palisades—the sense that your nearest neighbors include towering dark-red basalt cliffs almost two hundred million years old.

But what about the working landscapes of the New York metropolitan region? In Benton MacKaye's definition, regional connectedness needs such landscapes as much as it needs greenways, because delivery systems can bring you only those qualities which pour into them from reservoirs. It's possible to hook up a local wilderness reservoir, like Jamaica Bay's twelve thousand acres of marshland, upland, and open water, to a city greenway, like the forty-mile-long

A suite at L'Ermitage Hotel as interpreted by Lowell Nesbitt, Los Angeles.
L. Nesbitt '89

Brooklyn/Queens Greenway, and it's also possible, by adding only the smallest of detours, for the Brooklyn/Queens Greenway to start giving people a taste of working countryside: the Queens section of the path, as it is now planned, will cut through Cunningham Park on a route that is only a few hundred yards east of the Klein farm. In MacKaye terms, though, the two-acre Klein farm is nothing like a working-landscape reservoir, only a clear-running spring.

Robert Yaro, of the Center for Rural Massachusetts, who is an associate professor of regional planning at the University of Massachusetts—Amherst, is a former Boston city planner who went on to become chief planner, and then deputy commissioner, of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. Yaro has spent much of the nineteen-eighties on two aspects of the working-landscape-supply problem: first, finding the regional reservoirs before they're all drained by approaching development; and, second, setting up local management plans for all identified working landscapes—plans that treat working landscapes as regional assets. When you act locally while thinking regionally, Yaro says, you welcome growth and new development in working-landscape areas but you also arrange any changes around two unchanging principles: you keep at least fifty per cent of the land in production—a big enough block so that the farmers in an area can make a decent living—and you conserve the rural character of the place, the existing sense of connectedness, by seeing to it that new buildings capture the spirit of the place. Doing that, Yaro explains, is mostly a matter of thinking about creating two kinds of views at once—the views *of* a new building, and the views *from* it—and involves finding sites for buildings that let them fit in with the contours of the land and at the same time offer "uninterrupted views across long, open fields or pastures, permanently protected from future development."

Benton MacKaye, in the nineteen-twenties, thought that the population of a "regional city" could increase by more than forty per cent without any loss of connectedness, provided that the newcomers settled only in new villages within the working landscapes of the area, so that the old central city of the region stayed at its original size, and nearby wilderness land was left completely unoccupied. MacKaye's vision was a challenge to traditional either/or planning methods, and also called into question the conventional real-estate practice of calculating equity values by looking only at the rise and fall of private-property values in an area. In such an expanded definition of equity, the public value of a landscape or a neighborhood formed a permanent surplus, which could always be enriched during a development period that made private-equity values rise. And, when public value went up, private value would go up along with it; for example, people would be willing to pay more for a new house in a beautiful setting that had a beautiful view. But, at the same time, public value had to be treated as a separate equity account, with an established minimum balance that was never available for conversion into private value by speculators or through old-fashioned landscape-skimming techniques, such as building a new house that gives its owner a

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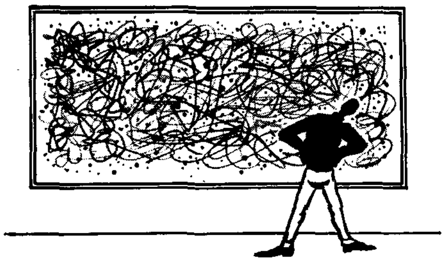
stunning view but spoils the views from all the other houses within, say, a five-mile radius.

MacKaye never actually built a regional city, but he did keep suggesting strategies for getting started; he thought, for instance, that "modern inventions" like electric power and commuter buses would make the job easier. And in "The New Exploration" he found several ways of expressing a central idea, which was that designing and caring for a regional city would always mean working directly with connectedness—with "the vital forces, rhythms, and aspects of definite desirable environments," as he put it at one point. "The job is not to 'plan' but to *reveal*," MacKaye said, by which he meant that what gets added to a place is less important than what you can stay close to. MacKaye also said that you remodelled a place through living in it, and reminded his readers that the point of developing a region is "not so much an affecting of the countryside as of *ourselves* who are to live in it." Almost at the end of his book, MacKaye confessed to a certain doubt about the task ahead: "The forces set loose in the jungle of our present civilization may prove more fierce than any beasts found in the jungle of the continents—far more terrible than any storms encountered within uncharted seas. . . . Can we control their flow before it controls us? Can we do it *soon enough*? This is a crucial question of our day. What instructions can we issue to our modern-day explorer (whether technician or amateur) to guide him in coping with this modern-day invasion?" But then optimism returned, and he wrote, "Our last instruction to our new explorer and frontiersman is to hold ever in sight his final goal—to reveal within our innate country . . . *a land in which to live*, a symphonious environment of melody and mystery."

Yaro says that regionalists can now show that MacKaye's innate optimism was well founded, and that several of his predictions about regional growth were highly accurate, among them the one about the ability of rural areas to take on large numbers of new nonfarming residents while preserving a partnership sense created by generations of farming families. MacKaye had specifically estimated in "The New Exploration" that the rural population of a regional city could grow without any difficulty from a low of around four thousand to a high of about twenty-three thousand—an increase of almost five hundred per cent in the number of working-landscape residents.

In "Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley: A Design Manual for Conservation and Development," a new book by Yaro and three associates, the Center for Rural Massachusetts presents a full-length analysis—complete with photographs, site plans, model bylaws, and vivid full-color drawings of future construction—of how a large, three-hundred-year-old working landscape can absorb high suburban densities of development over a forty-mile stretch of river terrain without jeopardizing future private-property values or sacrificing its ancient partnership sense. All the new housing would be detached single-family homes, as in most existing suburbs (research by the Center for Rural Massachusetts has shown that the average New England family still dreams of having a house and a lawn that are all its own), but the net gain in density would actually be higher than what is permitted in most suburbs, and closer to what you'd expect to find in a residential neighborhood of a small city, because the "Design Manual" makes room for the same number of people that could ordinarily be accommodated only by blocks of attached row houses. Yet in the "Design Manual" studies none of this growth would bring about the look of even a low-density suburb; the whole region, all forty miles of it, would still look like a working landscape and function as a working landscape.

The basic design ideas in the "Design Manual" are that most new houses, shops, and offices should be gathered together in clumps, usually at the far edges of open fields, and that, wherever it is possible, existing villages and woods should be used as closets for higher density—places where new construction can be neatly stowed away without diverting attention from partnership values. The proposed bylaws give meticulous consideration to the question of just how visible new projects can get, stipulating, say, the kind of "softly illuminated" nighttime signs that would be appropriate in front of roadside stores, so that you'd still have a sense of driving through moonlight and starlight.

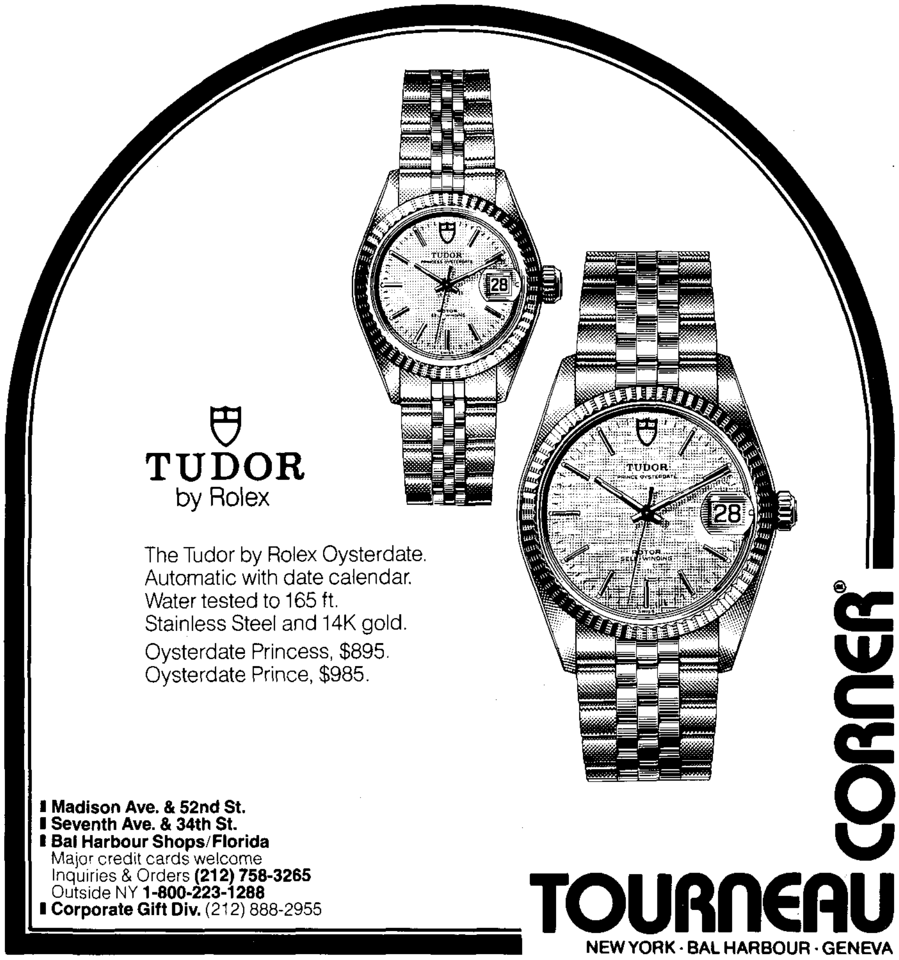


The landscape under examination in the "Design Manual" is the Pioneer Valley—a local name for the Massachusetts portion of the Connecticut River Valley, and, more specifically, for the small towns and broad expanses of richly productive riverfront farmland between Holyoke and the Vermont–New Hampshire border which have remained essentially unchanged since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The long view north along the river, particularly from a vantage point such as the summit of Mt. Holyoke, at the southern end of the rural portion of the valley, became a famous tourist attraction in the early nineteenth century, so the Pioneer Valley, like the Hudson River Valley, is a place where even the partnership sense has been carefully documented over the years, by landscape painters and by writers. For instance, there's "The Oxbow," Thomas Cole's gigantic, panoramic, thundercloud-laden canvas of the gliding sailboats and golden haystacks and grazing sheep, the plumes of smoke from farmhouse chimneys, and the soaring, wheeling birds he saw from the peak of Mt. Holyoke in 1836—a painting that hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Standing on that peak several years earlier, Timothy Dwight, the president of Yale University who became America's first epic poet, called the scene before him "the richest prospect in New England, and not improbably, the United States," and "a collection of beauties to which I know no parallel." And in his book "Travels in New York and New England" Dwight wrote, "When the eye traces this majestic stream, meandering with a singular course through these delightful fields, forcing its way between these mountains, exhibiting itself like a vast canal . . . it will be difficult not to say that with these exquisite varieties of beauty and grandeur the relish for landscape is filled."

The Pioneer Valley has already absorbed some conspicuous nonfarming uses without compromising its integrity. It contains five major colleges—Smith, Amherst, Mount Holyoke, Hampshire, and the University of Massachusetts. And since the late nineteen-sixties the valley has attracted so many craft workers—more than a thousand of them, including potters, weavers, woodcarvers, calligraphers, jewellers, glassblowers, blacksmiths, silversmiths, printers, bookbinders, and people who make musical instruments—that it has acquired a new reputation, as an East Coast Santa Fe.

Now the natural countryside in the Pioneer Valley is coming under the guardianship of several new Connecticut River regional environmental programs: in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire—the four states along the river's four-hundred-and-seven-mile course from the Canadian border to Long Island Sound—over nine hundred million dollars in federal, state, and local funds has been spent since 1970 to improve water quality in the river, and in 1987 the Nature Conservancy, which operates the largest privately owned nature-preserve system anywhere in the world, set up a Connecticut River Protection Program to save seven thousand acres of wild areas near the river, such as floodplain forests and riverside grasslands—"the best of the river's remaining natural communities," according to a recent issue of *The Nature Conservancy Magazine*, including all "those that still possess enough biological integrity to maintain themselves as functioning systems well into the future." Dennis Wolkoff, who is the Nature Conservancy vice-president in charge of the Eastern Regional Office, says, "The Connecticut River is the ecological thread that ties New England together."

There is so much at stake in the Pioneer Valley that the "Design Manual," with its proposals for concealing density, has already caused something of a sensation in planning circles: a development company known for carving up whole mountains into small lots bought a hundred and ten copies of the book for the use of its acquisitions-and-planning staff; the American Society of Landscape Architects gave the book a design award in 1988 as one of the best landscape books of the year; and both the water commissioner of Texas and the director of a national rural-planning institute in West Germany have



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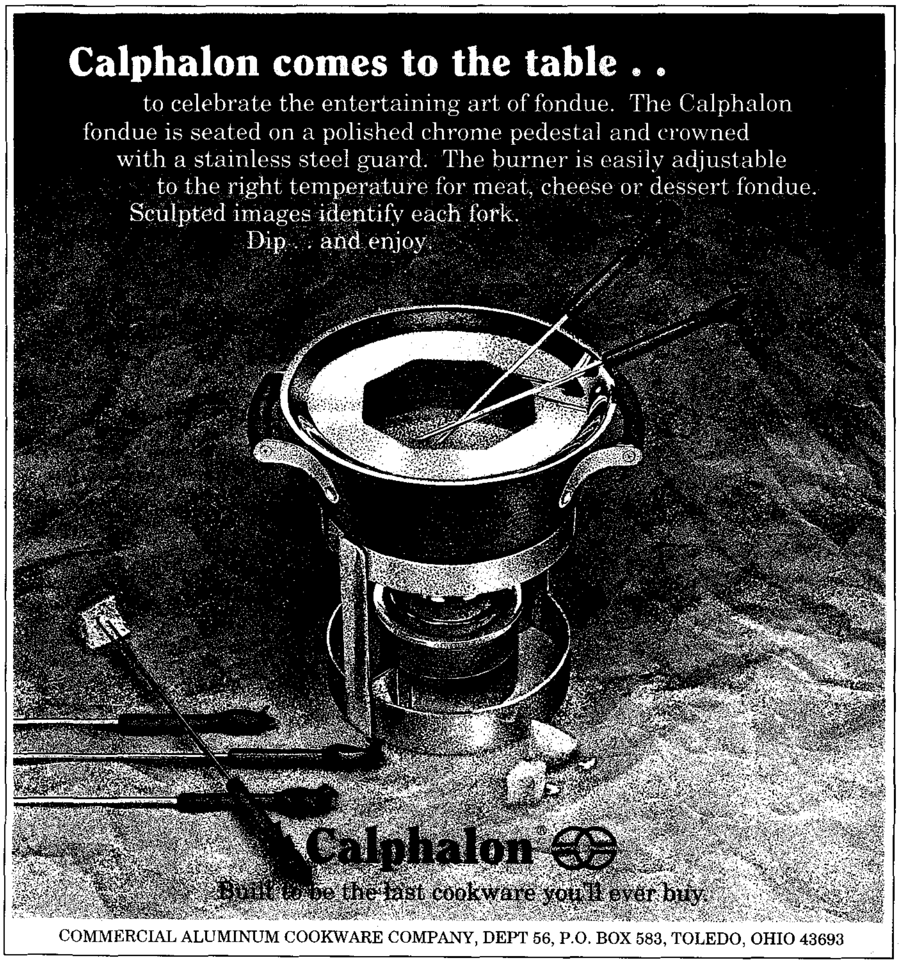

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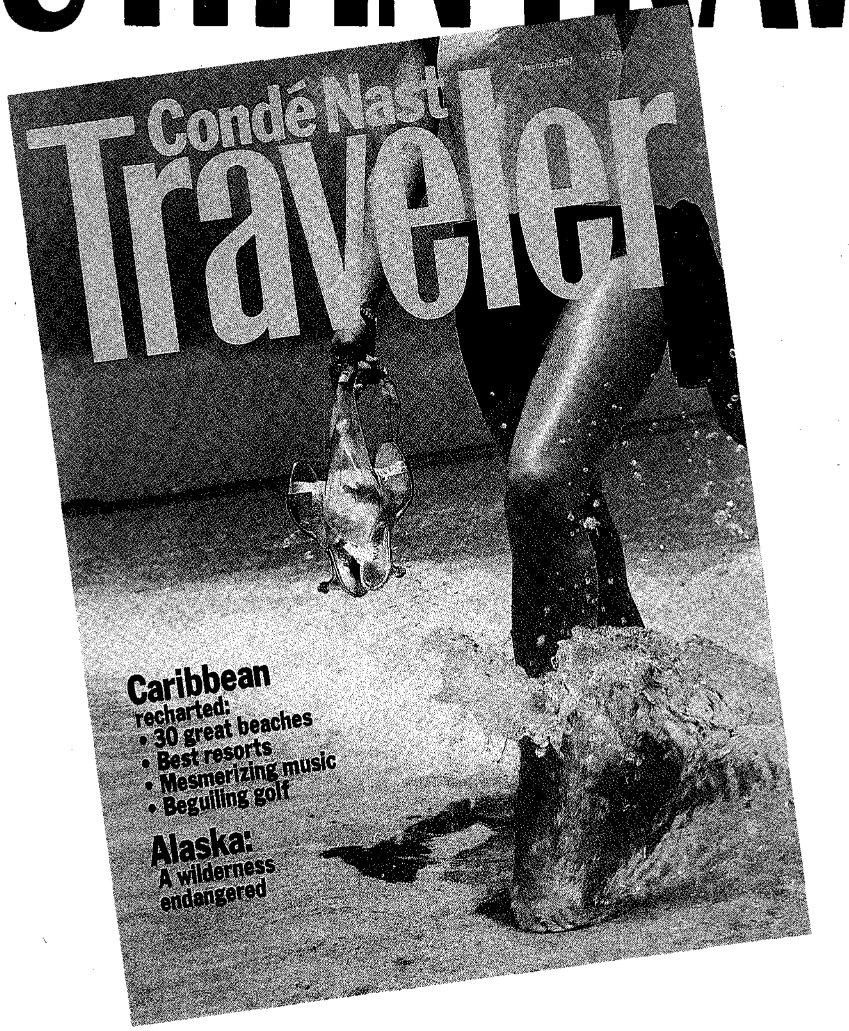

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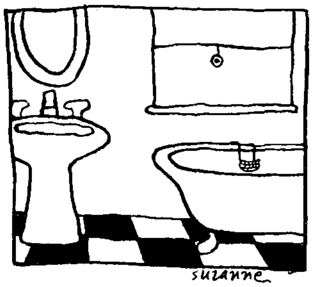
asked for copies. But Bob Yaro, who considers himself a close student of Benton MacKaye, has a slightly different, and more complicated, explanation for the instant success of the "Design Manual."

Yaro thinks that the conclusions in the "Design Manual" are workable only because two more MacKaye hunches about development have turned out to be true: areas can conceal density only by working directly with connectedness, and the process of working with connectedness is politically acceptable, because it's basically a democratic procedure rather than something outsiders can control or impose—all they can do is tap into local people's hidden expertise about connectedness ("The job is not to 'plan' but to *reveal*"). What MacKaye couldn't guess was that, in a post-interstate boom, there would be a couple of additional, equally compelling reasons for building a region around connectedness: it's cheap, and you can get it done quickly, while there's still a landscape around you to work with. And there was a gap in MacKaye's thinking—the gap that led him to have doubts. He didn't see the full force of the discouragement built into people after two hundred years of development decisions that ignored connectedness. Yaro discovered early in his career that to attract people's interest to regionalist projects he needed to take the psychology of regional planning one step beyond MacKaye's work: often, he found, before you could hope to make the public value of a place part of the local process of thinking about land-use decisions you had to take a preliminary step, which involved reconnecting people to their own sense of connectedness. Ever since, the first part of any Yaro project, urban or rural, has involved revalidating connectedness and helping it to find a voice.

PART of Yaro's approach has to do with learning how to avoid any oncoming development storm. "When I was growing up, in the nineteen-fifties, my grandparents had a farm outside Hartford, in a place called Andrews Corners, where their farm was actually one of the four corners of a crossroads," Yaro told me one day at the University of Massachusetts faculty club. "The farm was surrounded by orchards, and there was a skating pond for the winter, and blueberry bushes for July and August picking. By the time I was a teen-ager, the three other corners were being filled in, and there were supermarkets and gas stations standing on old farmland. By the time I got out of college, my grandparents' farm had become a regional shopping mall. Almost all the regionalists I know have had this kind of experience growing up—it's what gets them started. Part of the appeal of a movie like 'Back to the Future' is that it lets you see instantly what going back thirty years can do—the suburban mall vanishes, and old fields and barns reappear. One of the few human rights that aren't officially guaranteed in this country is an agreement that the places you grow up caring about will be there for you when you're ready to start a family of your own.

Yaro paused, and then said, "Until very recently, it seemed as though we had two land ethics in the United States—five per cent of the nation was set aside as national parks, and treated as special places where we talked about things like 'America the Beautiful' and 'We, the People.' This was neutral territory, but it seemed that different rules had to be obeyed through most of the rest of the land: either 'Take the Money and Run' or 'Private Property: Keep Out.' But all the time, the first land ethic was in place inside vast numbers of people who would have told you if you'd asked them—and I have—that they never thought about the land and didn't have an opinion on the subject. But, given the right setting, the right evocation, the right stimulus, many of those people who put themselves in the 'Don't Know' column turn out to be very articulate and outspoken concerning the special qualities they care about in their own communities. People can become vehicles for places. These are the feelings and this is the understanding now bubbling up from real people who live in real places—and, as a result, there's a ferment in the country about land values that hasn't been seen since MacKaye was writing, in the nineteen-twenties. Even the environmental movement in the nineteen-seventies didn't tap all these concerns; at first, we were paying so much attention only to clean air and clean water that I used to think that any visitors from outer space would immediately ask each other, 'Are these creatures really *terrestrial* beings?'



"Of course, where the environmental movement did get involved with land-use issues, as in the case of wetlands, hardened attitudes began to melt in short order, and we now have a tremendous amount of official machinery to protect swamplands, which a generation ago were thought to be disease-ridden, and places that generated only poisonous, putrid miasmas. In the meantime, the legal system has caught up with the biology. I think we're now maturing as a nation in our thinking about land-use issues. Until very recently, much of the rationale behind American economic-development plans boiled down to something close to 'Put up a shopping center, hope that it will eventually create some jobs nearby, and then call it a success.' And now—it's fascinating—here we are, living in an era in which New Jersey doesn't want to be New Jersey anymore: it helped build a consensus for land protection on Cape Cod last summer when people who had given up all hope heard the governor of New Jersey declare that he was going to save the Jersey coast by limiting development. After that, discussion began anew. 'You can't buy back the Cape,' some people said. And other people started to say, 'They shouldn't be allowed to treat Cape Cod as if it were any old place.' A new approach to community development is in the making—one that asks people to think about the long-term needs of a place and of all its residents. We're in the process of building local institutions that take over the job of looking after public value on a volunteer basis, and we're learning how to reinvest in areas so that they'll be more valuable to the next generation than they are to ours. After all, the postwar era has been this country's great age of wealth, and during such periods you're supposed to embellish your civilization and your country with something that can endure—like the Roman aqueducts. Most of what we've been doing is throwaway stuff—it can't be sustained. Sometimes part of the problem is learning how to bypass

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the gatekeepers—the entrenched local interests who can think only about increasing real-estate values. I think we can now show that stewardship springs from connectedness—it gives people back a sense of thinking responsibly on behalf of the whole community, and it sends a shiver up the spines of the gatekeepers, by reminding them that someone can take away their keys."

Yaro smiled, and went on, "It's not development that causes problems—only *patterns* of development. And since the country now needs at least a couple of million new units of housing every year just to keep even with population growth, if we start constructing houses now that build public value for the future we can create a new national pattern of development within thirty years. I began working on this problem fifteen years ago, when I had a job as a neighborhood planner in Dorchester, an old blue-collar section of Boston. It was bleeding to death, because the people there thought there was nothing left in the community they could hang on to. The housing stock in the area was in fact sensational—Victorian mansions and big old triple-decker, three-family frame houses. These houses have now been rediscovered and sell for as much as a quarter of a million dollars, but at the time Dorchester folks were just walking away from them, and you could get one for eight thousand or less. My colleagues at City Hall and I devised a strategy—we started with the easy stuff. We got a couple of neighborhood houses listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and we conjured up a new name for the area—Melville Park. Then we organized tours, and got members of the Victorian Society in Cambridge and Wellesley—people who had ignored Dorchester for years—to visit the stately homes of Melville Park on Saturday afternoons. It worked. People stopped moving away—because if people from the suburbs would stop by, people who could choose to live anywhere, it had to be a decent place to live.

"When I moved over to the Department of Environmental Management, I found I could apply the same kind of thinking to whole cities, and it was still just as important to start with the easy stuff, because D.E.M. was an absolute bargain-basement type of operation, with a consistently low budget. The Massachusetts Miracle was under way—an economic-development boom in a state that had been a backwater for decades. But because this was a boom of the modern era most of the development headed straight for the prosperous suburbs, and federal statistics officially classified twenty-nine of the thirty-five cities in the state as economically distressed. It was already a policy of the Dukakis administration to do something about this—'We don't throw away cities,' Mike Dukakis had told all his state agencies—and there was a hazy notion abroad that it might be possible to give cities a lift by setting up urban state parks that had some kind of education-and-preservation component. My Melville Park days had taught me how to find the special qualities of a place that supposedly didn't have any left. A few of us began to think that a park, bringing a visible physical improvement into the heart of a city that hadn't had a nickel of private money invested in it for fifty years, might turn out to be a new way of attracting developers' attention. In Lowell, we looked at the magnificent old mill buildings downtown, and we later went down to Fall River, a riverside city of a hundred thousand people, more than half of them Portuguese families who used to fish for a living. In Fall River, we walked along the waterfront and found only rubble-strewn lots, chemical tanks, and gas tanks—and not one single foot of public access.

"We set up what we called Urban Heritage State Parks on these two sites, and they were followed by new state parks in a dozen other Massachusetts cities, as part of an ongoing project that has now cost the state a hundred million dollars. And so far that public investment has generated half a billion dollars of spending by private developers. The property right next to the new parks has shot up in value, but most of the private money—I'd say up to eighty per cent of it—gets spent on projects in other parts of the Urban Heritage State Parks cities. Now each one of these cities is considered a good place to live and do business in—a place that has been officially recognized as special enough to deserve a state park of its own. Most important, these places are back on their feet and are pulling their own weight, thanks to

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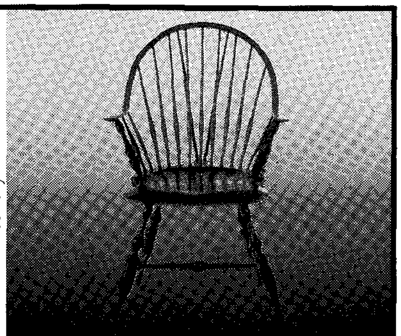

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what the easy stuff helped bring about."

ONCE the urban parks had become a repeatable success, Yaro turned his attention to another problem—the countryside. Bringing the cities back into the economic mainstream meant that something like a fifth of the private money for new economic development could be redirected from the suburbs to the downtown. But four-fifths was moving outward from the suburbs and grabbing at the working landscapes just beyond the last streets of houses. Was there any way for the state not to throw away the countryside? Yaro and his associates, still operating on a shoestring, worked out a two-step approach to the question. The first step involved giving specialness official recognition, as embodied in the Department of Environmental Management's "Massachusetts Landscape Inventory," a two-hundred-and-sixty-eight-page book published in 1982. The follow-up step, which had to do with hooking into local connectedness, was launched in 1988, when the Center for Rural Massachusetts brought out the "Design Manual," with its local strategies for protecting one of the distinctive landscapes previously identified in the "Inventory."

The "Massachusetts Landscape Inventory," which surveys five million acres of land, was put together mainly by three and a half people—Neil Jorgensen, a geologist, Mark S. Finnen and Harry L. Dodson, two landscape architects, and Bob Yaro, as a part-timer, shuttling between projects. The group was able to avoid making invidious comparisons—deciding, say, whether the Berkshires are more beautiful than Cape Cod—by a simple device. They divided the state up into six "physiographic regions," large areas with broadly similar landscapes and cultural characteristics, and then looked for the best landscapes in each of them. The regions were the Coastal Plain, the Seaboard Lowland, the Central Uplands, the Connecticut Valley, the Berkshire Hills, and the Taconic Section. Massachusetts had a history of inventorying its scenic features—an earlier survey had been made in 1929. But the 1929 report, which led to protection for Mt. Holyoke and other outstanding natural features of the state, largely ignored its working landscapes, though the state was then still forty per cent farmland. Farmland seemed an endless resource in the nineteen-twenties and, besides, it was considered to be just "ordinary" scenery.

By the early nineteen-eighties, the situation had changed: three-quarters of the farmland in the state had disappeared between 1950 and 1980. The new inventory-takers therefore knew they had to work fast. But they found that they had two obstacles to overcome. They could turn to knowledgeable local people for hints about where to get started, but even the most concerned local people tended to be hazy about sites a few miles away from their own villages. So the surveyors had to weave together a series of local suggestions in order to get a complete picture of the distinctive qualities of a region. Also, it turned out that, even in the nineteen-eighties, existing American scenic-assessment techniques concentrated exclusively on natural features, such as mountain ranges and waterfalls; farmland, it seemed, was still officially an "ordinary" commodity. So Jorgensen, Finnen, Dodson, and Yaro adopted a scenic-assessment method used by the Countryside Commission of Scotland—a technique developed to give "a central position" to landscapes that have "undergone centuries of human influence," according to the "Inventory." The Scottish work could be welcomed in New England, according to the completed "Massachusetts Landscape Inventory," because "while the primeval forests of Massachusetts were undoubtedly beautiful environments, today's second-growth forest provides only limited internal views in most areas"; that is, as the "Inventory" went on to explain, "in a region of generally subdued topography, second-growth forests tend to limit visual quality. If cultural, agricultural, and historic landscapes did not exist in Massachusetts, scenic areas would generally be limited to the seashore, lakes, rivers, wetlands, and the few areas of sharp relief."

Working with the tips provided by local landscape authorities, the survey team pored over topographic maps published by the United States Geological Survey, looking for basic information they could spot-check in the field, such as changes in elevation, whether the land was open or wooded, and the likelihood of coming across vistas. The maps also helped them rule out areas with very little potential. Then they drove around the state looking at everything they had heard about or found on a map and, back in the office, prepared new maps, on which they ranked as "distinctive," "noteworthy," or "common" the landscape features in each of the physiographic regions. When they totalled their findings, four per cent of the land in the state, about two hundred thousand acres, seemed to deserve a "distinctive" rating, and five per cent, or a quarter of a million acres, could be considered "noteworthy."

The rankings didn't change the legal status of any Massachusetts landscapes, although the Department of Environmental Management at once adopted the "Massachusetts Landscape Inventory" as a guide for future purchases of state parkland. But three years later, in 1985, the "Inventory" listings gave farmers in the towns of Ashfield and Hawley, in the Berkshire Hills, a way of successfully resisting the United States Air Force, which had announced plans to build a "telecommunications facility" on a six-hundred-acre hilltop potato field straddling the Ashfield-Hawley town line. The main components of the facility were to be thirty-one freestanding antennas, ranging in height from two hundred and forty feet to three hundred. The antennas would have been lighted at night, and they would have been clearly visible from the summit of Mt. Greylock, the highest point in the state, twenty miles to the west.

Farmers at first pointed out that potatoes were already a dwindling crop in Massachusetts, and that the field the Air Force was looking at represented ten per cent of the potato-growing land left in the state. The Air Force, in its reply, said that the field was suitable for antennas in part because farming had already made the ground clear and level. And an Air Force spokesman also said that the site had been selected "because of its remoteness, so it isn't in someone's back yard." The site was, however, in the middle of one of the "distinctive" landscapes mapped by the "Massachusetts Landscape Inventory," and, as a result, James Gutensohn, the commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, toured the site with the state's agriculture commissioner, Gus Schumacher, and both officials later announced their opposition to the project. They were joined by Silvio Conte,

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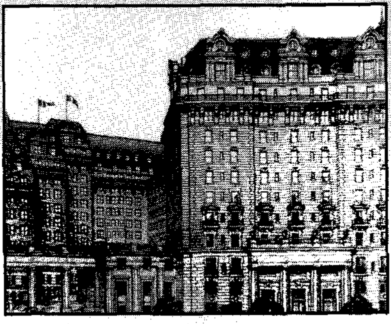

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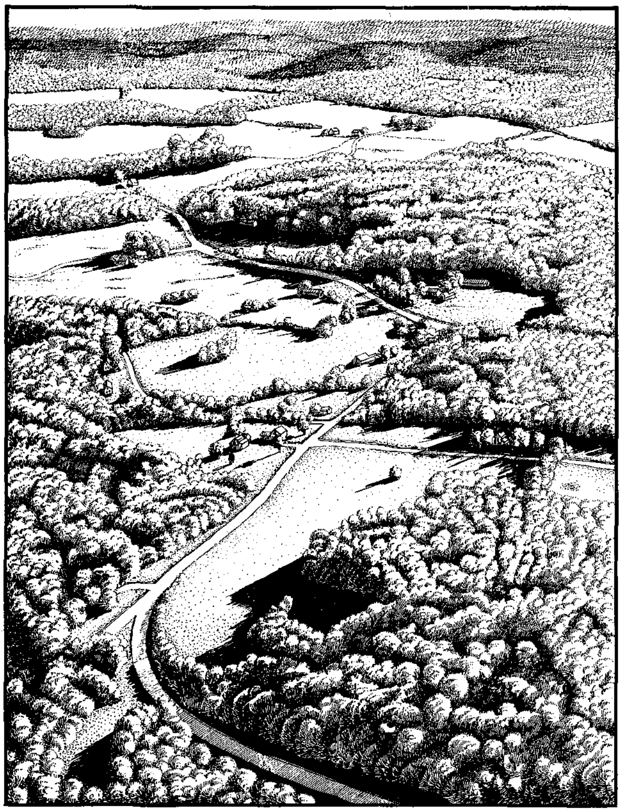
the area's congressman (who sits on the House Appropriations Committee and threatened to cut off the airplane allowance), and by the Boston *Globe*, which declared in an editorial that "the antenna farm is wrong-headed and ill-advised," and urged the Air Force to start looking elsewhere. Several months later, the Air Force agreed to do so. Last year, the "Inventory" won a second major victory when the New England Power Company withdrew plans for a new coal-fired generating plant on a "distinctive" landscape at the north end of the Connecticut River Valley.

Harry Dodson, who is also one of the co-authors of the "Design Manual," suggests that the "Inventory" serves another statewide, or regionwide, function, beyond helping to protect landscapes from such encroachments: by assembling a comprehensive and panoramic picture, it enables different groups of people to detect the distortions lodged in their own thinking about landscapes. "What we're often finding is that people in any area have at least two levels of feelings about their region," Dodson told me. "And these feelings don't always quite mesh—some of them are clear-eyed visions, and others are based on squinting, and very few people have ever sorted them out. There's usually a broad consensus among local people on the special places in their own neighborhoods—though they may not be aware of how widely shared their own attachments are until someone brings them together and starts a conversation on the subject. At the same time, they may hold very odd views about areas beyond their daily reach. Many state officials who work in Boston, for instance, think of Massachusetts as the United States in miniature, and for some of them the Connecticut River Valley is the boonies, a place as far away as the Great Plains. 'How's your view of the Rockies?' is a typical statehouse joke. This is all because of the Snow Belt, as it's called. There's heavy snow every winter in the hills west of Boston, so Bostonians have decided that the valley is unreachable. One result is that most of the tourists we get in the valley come from New York State and not from eastern Massachusetts."

According to Bob Yaro, there is one more piece of landscape thinking that often needs rearranging before the countryside of America can be considered safe. Land-use decisions in New England are made by local towns, and there are more than a thousand towns in the six New England states. The trouble is that many of these towns think they have already protected their open spaces by adopting one-acre or two-acre zoning—a guideline that guarantees the preservation of at least a full acre of unbuilt land between new houses. What the towns don't seem to be able to see in advance is that those zoning laws actually require them to suburbanize, because a town that has one house on each acre is a town that has open space but no openness. As Yaro says, the only land left over is in "pieces that are too big to mow and too small to plow."

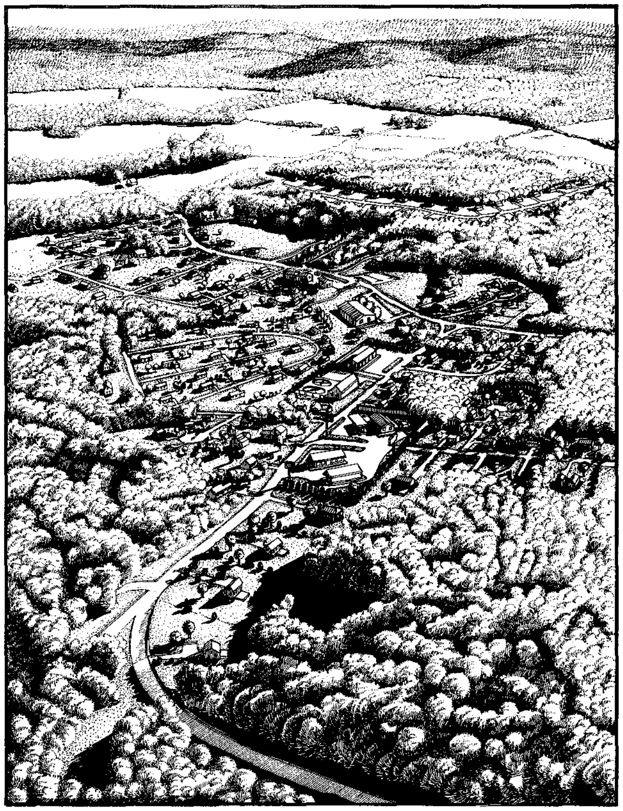


A typical New England landscape . . .

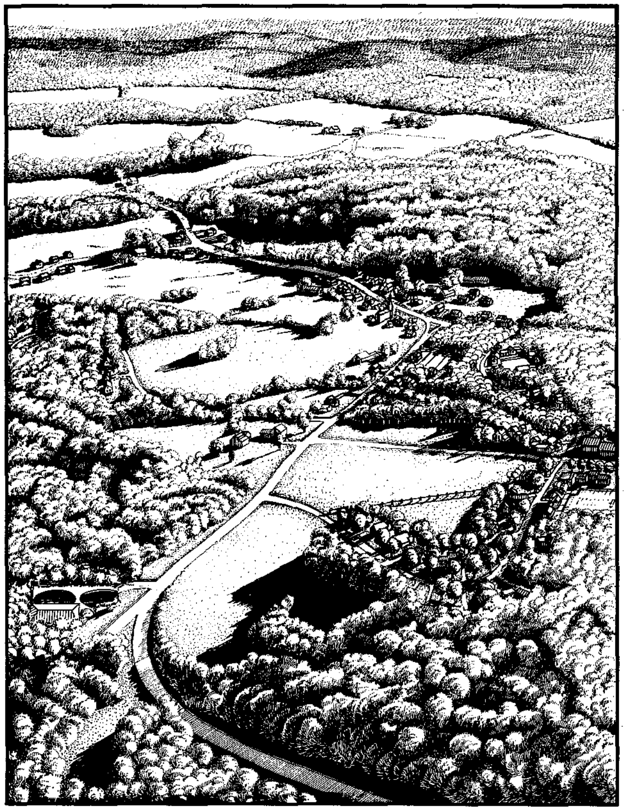
Greenbelt Alliance, a nonprofit regionalist group in the San Francisco Bay Area, has developed a new technique for showing an area which of its towns are most immediately threatened by suburbanization. The nine-county Bay Area includes almost four million acres of ranches, farms, vineyards, parks, open space, and watershed lands, and the Alliance used to publish a gray-and-green "Greenbelt" map of the region—gray identified urbanized areas, most of them contained within a strip of land bordering San Francisco Bay. Around the gray was what looked like almost an ocean of dark-green open space. "A beautiful map," says Larry Orman, executive director of Greenbelt Alliance. "And that was the problem with it. Our entire huge greenbelt looked serene and stable. When in fact development pressures have been increasing wildly in some areas and almost not at all in others."

So Orman and Jim Sayer, a research associate, looked at existing zoning, freeway locations, and other planning-and-growth factors at work in the Bay Area, and last year published "Threats to the Greenbelt," a new map in five colors that vividly identifies the areas most at risk. The gray areas are unchanged from the old map. But now there are only patches of dark green nearby—representing parks and other securely safeguarded open spaces, such as private open space protected by conservation easements. A much larger area is now colored light green, indicating farms, ranches, and other properties that seem to be safe in the short run. Running through the light-green lands are bands of pink—"Medium Risk" areas, where land-use controls are sketchy or only partly effective. Finally, there are splotches of angry red: the "High Risk" lands along highway corridors and around the edges of the gray urbanized zones. It's a map that seems to be almost violently in motion, and when you look at it intently you can almost begin to see the pink areas intensifying into red, and the red lands fading to gray.

The Connecticut River Valley "Design Manual" uses its four-color drawings, grouped into what Yaro calls a series of triptychs, to show rural towns the inevitable consequences of suburban development, whenever it comes. You are shown three views of the same spot: a contemporary view, followed by two different tomorrows—first, the tomorrow that has been ordered up by one- and two-acre zoning, and then an alternative tomorrow, based on con-



developed conventionally.



A regionalist solution for the same density.

K. Wilson

nectedness. The two future views, as the text explains, contain the same number of new buildings. The first picture, of the existing landscape, is always printed on a right-hand page, so you have to turn the page to look into the two futures—a conventional suburban buildout on the left, and the regionalist alternative on the right. This is a deliberately arranged shock to the senses, because it is at first almost impossible to see any difference between today's landscape and the regionalist vision of tomorrow; there are big fields and small villages in both pictures.

People who are looking through the "Design Manual" for the first time often find themselves flipping pages back and forth so that they can stare at these two views. It's almost like a puzzle-page game of "What's Hidden in This Picture?" Only after careful comparison can you notice that, yes, in the third picture a new little street has been tucked inside the village, just south of the church, and it has on it the same five new houses that in the second view are sitting on four-fifths of the big open field between the village and the Connecticut River. The triptych seen above was left out of the "Design Manual," partly for lack of space, and partly because two years ago, when all the "Design Manual" triptychs were being prepared, by Harry Dodson and an artist, Kevin Wilson, it seemed almost too shocking—the intense level of development it shows was still practically unheard of in remote New England hill towns. Rapid suburbanization of this kind seems like a much more imminent possibility in 1989.

Since the "Design Manual" restricts not development but only the pattern of development, Yaro sees it as a mechanism for building private equity and public value simultaneously. And he points out, too, how much money can be saved by learning to think regionally. In the last decade, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has acted to save farmland by buying up farmers' development rights, but land in Massachusetts is now so valuable that the huge new purchasing funds were able to acquire the rights to only a small percentage of the state's farmland. "Acquisition alone can't work," Yaro says. "If we have to buy the land, the best we can hope for is preserving postage stamps of green surrounded by seas of metropolitan and resort development." The "Design Manual" plan, by contrast, immediately reserves for farming purposes half the farmland in any working landscape, at no cost to anyone.

The voters of the towns and cities in the Pioneer Valley will have to agree to the ideas of the "Design Manual" before they can become reality, and Randall Arendt, the associate director of the Center for Rural Massachusetts, is now touring the valley—and the many towns in the United States and Canada that have asked him to come—with a slide show of triptychs and photographs. Sometimes he comes home at night feeling encouraged. "I have to tell you that I had an almost mystical experience at the town meeting in Belchertown, just east of the Pioneer Valley," he told me recently. "The meeting was to vote on two zoning proposals. I made a seven-minute presentation, and I couldn't even tell if people were listening to me. Only one voter in ten turns out for a town meeting, so you never know who it is you're talking to—and this is a town that has voted down cluster zoning three years in a row. Then the voting began: Article One, a requirement for cluster zoning for all new buildings hooking into town water supplies and sewage lines, passed by one hundred and ninety-six to eight, and Article Two, which called for mandatory cluster zoning for any new buildings that would use well water and septic tanks, passed by two hundred and four to nothing—a unanimous vote." —TONY HISS

(*This is the second part of a two-part article.*)

IN FASHION

Visionaries

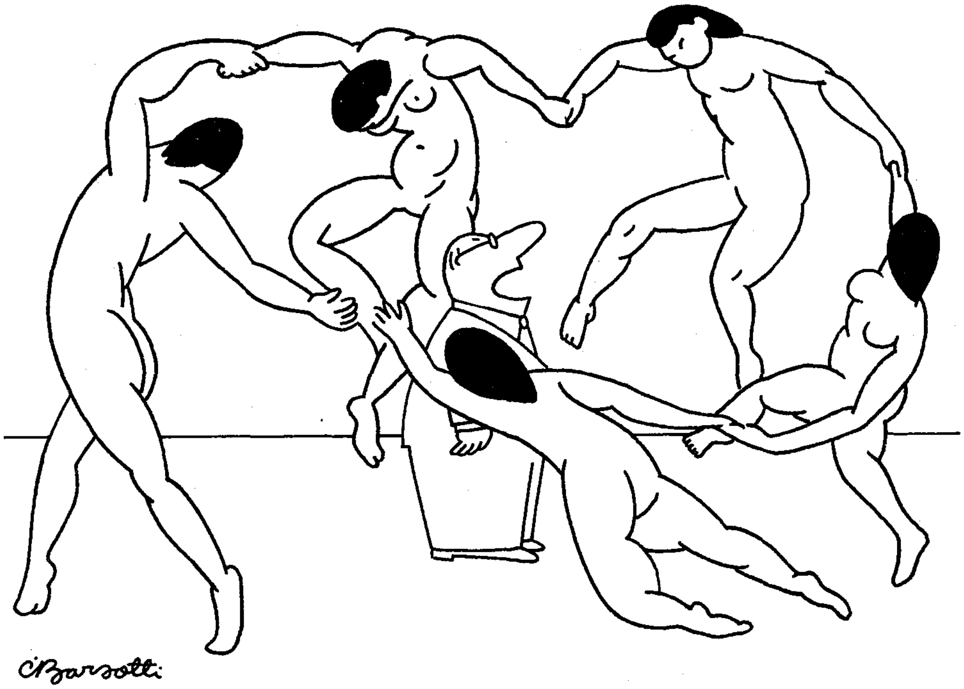
A SULTRY afternoon in L.A., sanctuary of the sun god, capital of the movie industry, playground of rock stars—New York may have lost its glamour, but L.A.'s is intact: this is a city built on attitude. A young man strides purposefully into L.A. Eyeworks, an optical shop on Melrose Avenue, and comes to an abrupt halt in front of a display along the left-hand wall. A striking woman with long black hair and black-framed glasses approaches him. "Is there something I can help you with?" she asks. "Yeah," he answers. "I need some shades."

AT 10 A.M. on the Sunday after a party for which Tony Gross crossed the Channel, he comes down the stairs of his two-star Paris hotel wearing a three-piece red-and-black pin-striped suit, a big gold watch, a massive diamond pinkie ring, and sunglasses. Gross is the creative half of Cutler & Gross, London opticians, which has been in business for eighteen years now. A few years ago, the firm started producing a wholesale line of sunglasses; while Graham Cutler minds the store, in Knightsbridge, Gross designs the frames, which are sold all over Europe, America, Japan, and Australia. The sunglasses he is wearing—slightly mean-looking, he hopes, with small, rimless, oblong dark-green lenses suspended from a narrow gold bar—are vintage 1962, not of his own design. He never wears glasses from his line. "All the people who make glasses wearing their own glasses—it's so corny," he says. Gross, who is bald, heavyset, and what the English call shortsighted, explains, "I'm trying to do a look. I'd like to be Jean Gabin. I've got the build, I've got the suit—and, well, that's about it. Everything else is lacking."

A man with a mission, Gross is out to move sunglasses away from the bookish, Brideshead look and toward something sexy. The period he worships, he says, is the fifties and early sixties. "I would personally rather look like a Greek shipping magnate than like a successful Wall Street banker. Or, if I were a girl, I'd rather look like Audrey Hepburn than like some bluestocking who has just got her degree at Oxford." He talks about the similarities between wearing glasses and wearing a mask—the element of fantasy, the precedents in primitive cultures. "There's a lot of literature about psychology and eyes," he says. "Eye contact is, of course, the first sexual contact we ever have. And then there are all those expressions, like 'giving people the eye'—we don't give them the nose or the mouth—and all those aggressive things, like wanting to poke somebody in the eye or wanting to tear his eyes out, which, of course, Freud said means wanting to castrate somebody. I don't want to go overboard about this, but you can see the sexual connotations."

Gross describes the glasses he designs as being at the same time "retro" and "cutting edge." He says that he looks backward for inspiration, that he never tries to be "clever." In an attempt to revive the wide-eyed sort of sunglasses that became famous as Jackie Onassis's shield against the paparazzi, he has designed several models reminiscent of the sixties, including a group of figure-eight-shaped plastic frames with "clashing," rather than matching, lenses (red with fuchsia, yellow with red, clear with blue); many of these have wide sidepieces, so that they can be worn, sixties style, on the top of the head. There are narrow, white plastic frames with red or green lenses, pink marbleized plastic frames with pink mirrored lenses, and "cowboy glasses"—gold frames, tooled at the bridge and the corners, with mirrored silver lenses.

In 1985, the laws in England changed, and opticians were suddenly allowed to advertise. Now when a pair of Cutler & Gross sunglasses appears in a magazine the firm is credited. This change, as Gross sees it, conveniently coincides with a shift in thinking that has been taking place, with people coming to regard glasses less as a medical necessity and more as a fashion accessory. In England, he admits, the battle has been uphill all the way, given the national suspicion of fashion. "And the climate doesn't help," he says. Gross has a joke about English sunglasses—that they have clear lenses. Other countries have been quicker to come around, but only partway. Gross is glad to see sunglasses being sold in department stores, but he laments the conditions. "As the big designers are going into glasses, theirs are often put with their clothes. And mine end up at a counter somewhere near the perfume department, where they're appallingly displayed, all crammed in together. They



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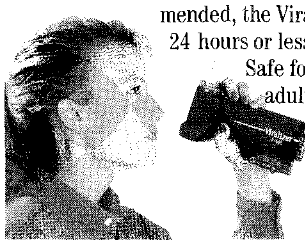

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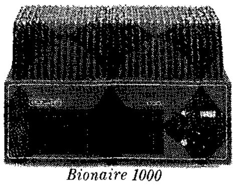

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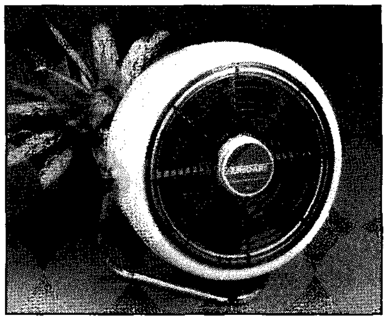

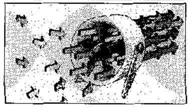

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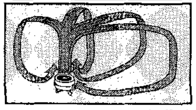

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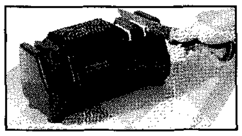

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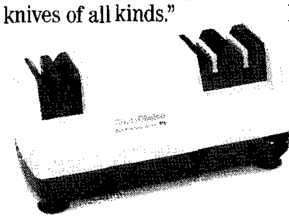

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lie there—well, I think of them as dead, really."

IN Paris, on the Rue Saint-Martin, one Sunday afternoon in February: A crowd of fashion journalists, retailers, and would-be designers stands in front of the entrance to Yohji Yamamoto's showroom, spilling over into the street, and waits for the doors to open for the showing of his spring collection for men. "Fashion's got so *boring*," a man with a British accent complains to his companion. "Don't you agree?" The companion does. "Really," the man goes on, "there is nothing to get excited about, nothing that makes you sit up in your chair and think, I simply must have that." The companion nods sadly.

"I didn't know you wore glasses," one woman says to another, who is sporting rectangular pistachio-colored frosted-plastic frames, with clear lenses.

"I used to wear contact lenses," the other says, "but I stopped."

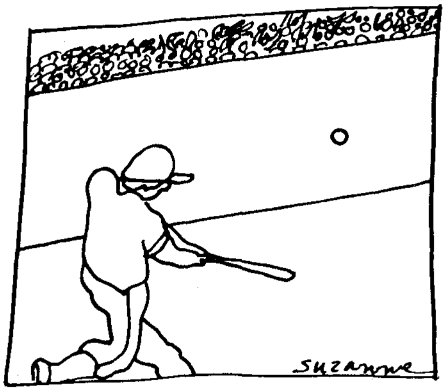
"I know," the first woman says. "Contacts are such a nuisance."

"No, it wasn't that," the second woman explains. "I just all of a sudden started seeing all these glasses I had to have. First it was sunglasses, then I had some sunglass frames made for my prescription. And I liked the way I looked in them so much that I wore them to work. Then I ordered some more. Now I have fourteen pairs. I only wear my contacts if it's raining."

AT a party last spring in Washington, guests watch the Academy Awards on television: Geena Davis and Jeff Goldblum arrive on camera to present the award for documentary short subject. Davis is wearing an off-the-shoulder sea-foam-green satin dress with a long skirt and a bustle. She and Goldblum read the nominations on the teleprompter. Davis tears open the envelope, puts on her glasses—pretty, upswept tartan frames—and, looking the camera squarely in the eye, announces the winner. "Huh," one of the party guests, a film critic, says in amazement. "What?" asks a woman in his vicinity. "Look," he says, nodding toward the TV set. "There's Geena Davis in an evening gown, wearing *glasses*."

CHRISTIAN ROTH, a tall, affable young man with twenty-twenty vision, works out of a suite of rooms in New York's garment district, designing a line of glasses for his company, Optical Affairs, and marketing frames designed by Jean Paul Gaultier. Roth was born in Germany and first visited the United States fifteen years ago, as a teen-ager; from then on, he says, his dream was to return. In 1982, after working for six months at an optical shop in Berlin, he began designing his own line, came to New York, and founded his company. The market in high-quality, innovative eyewear—what is described on Seventh Avenue as "fashion-forward"—was wide open, he says. The only problem was price. "Because at that time the market wasn't really ready for a hundred-and-fifty- or two-hundred-dollar retail price. But there was hardly anybody else, and there was a big market, so the business worked well from Day One. Since then, so many new companies have been started—every designer name you can imagine has turned up with an eyewear license. And existing companies from the sixties and seventies have upgraded a lot—they can't offer regular merchandise anymore, they have to offer something a little bit interesting. So I would say five years ago the buyer picked from ten lines and today he picks from two or three hundred."

Roth's biggest seller this summer has been a pair of rimless sunglasses that opticians are encouraged to cut to suit the customer's face, using diagrams that match frame shape to face shape. He also makes frames covered in lizard or in "fur" (a leopard-spotted calf); "antique" silver frames that "age," or oxidize, with wear; tricolor sunglasses (like trifocals in color); and a wooden parquet frame. In Gaultier's collection, there are metal frames with magnetic clip-on sun lenses, glasses with spring-hinged sidepieces, frames embellished with nuts and bolts and other assorted hardware. The customers for these are, Roth admits, mostly men.



Not surprisingly, Roth thinks that the recent trend toward having more than one pair of glasses is a healthy one. "For example, an elegant lady used to have twenty pairs of shoes and only one pair of glasses," he says. "Today, she has thirty pairs of shoes and ten or twelve pairs of glasses, fitting with particular things in her wardrobe. Most people say shoes are so important, but if you look at somebody the first thing that hits your eye is the frame, and not the shoe." In the campaign to promote the notion of eyewear as fashion, Roth says, *Elle* has led the way, as the first fashion magazine to put a model wearing sunglasses on the cover—defying the prevailing opinion that eye contact is what sells magazines at the newsstand.

IN the early nineteen-thirties, the United States Army Air Corps asked Bausch & Lomb to develop eyewear that would protect against the sun's rays, in response to complaints from pilots, who were experiencing eyestrain, headaches, and nausea. The result was the first lens that could block ultraviolet and infrared light, check glare, and still accurately convey the colors of the spectrum. Anti-glare goggle-shaped glasses were issued to the military in 1932, and four years later Bausch & Lomb introduced a civilian version of these aviator sunglasses (eventually trademarked Ray-Ban). Norman Salik, the company's vice-president in charge of promotion and publicity, calls this "MacArthur look"—the leather flight jacket, the aviator sunglasses—"the start of the Ray-Ban tradition." Six years ago, he says, Bausch & Lomb undertook marketing surveys in four different countries, and in every case the results came back the same: among the words people used most often to describe Ray-Ban aviator glasses were "American" and "macho."

Bausch & Lomb now sells Ray-Bans in some sixty different shapes and in dozens of materials; there are over a hundred versions of the aviator alone. Salik attributes the recent surge in the optical business to the use of sunglasses in fashion magazines and in the movies. In May of 1982, *GQ* featured in its fashion pages a pair of Ray-Ban Wayfarer sunglasses, a style first introduced thirty years before, and over the course of that year sales of the Wayfarer climbed to more than eight times what they had been. When Tom Cruise appeared in "Risky Business" wearing Wayfarers and in "Top Gun" wearing Ray-Ban aviators, sales of those models went through the roof. As proof of how much the industry has grown, Salik cites the sunglasses boutiques and kiosks that started in California, Texas, and Florida and are now turning up all over the country; the Sunglass Hut, in the Danbury Fair Mall, in Connecticut, did five hundred thousand dollars' worth of business last year.

AT a bus stop on Fifth Avenue: An elderly woman with swollen ankles turns to a man who is tuned in to his Walkman and asks, "Does this bus go to Thirty-fourth Street?" He continues moving his head in a turtle-like motion and tapping his thigh, in time to his private music. "Excuse me." She tries again, a little louder. "Do you know if this bus goes to Thirty-fourth Street?" He turns his face to her but says nothing. In his mirrored aviator sunglasses she can see herself—the picture of frustration. "Hey," she says, giving him a good shove on the shoulder. "Is anybody home?"

THE name that arises most often in conversations with people in the fashion industry about eyewear is Alain Mikli. It is Mikli, they say, who made everyone sit up and take notice of glasses in their own right, as something more than an adjunct to clothes. It is Mikli who has pushed back the frontiers, and if the glasses he's designed haven't always been wearable, at least they've made their point; glasses that would have qualified as outrageous ten years ago are merely unusual today, now that Mikli has gone such a long way beyond them. In person, Mikli has the appearance and demeanor of a café intellectual. He wears a white shirt, bluejeans, and glasses from his own collection—stern-looking oval lenses rimmed in matte-black wire, with a bar of clear plastic crosshatched in blue, green, and purple across the top. Tall and serious, with long, dark hair and a low, quiet voice, he talks about his work in eloquent, often philosophical terms.

Glasses, to his way of thinking, are "*pour s'habiller le regard*"; he calls himself a "*couturier pour les yeux.*" To dress *le regard*, he says, is much more important than to dress the body. One can conceal a physical flaw with clothing, but one can't hide anything in *le regard*. It is *le regard* that is for him the most important thing about a person—the thing that is the strongest, the most subtle, the most intimate. It is *le regard*, he explains, that enables us to communicate with the outside world, to see what's happening around us, to perceive danger; it is thanks to *le regard* that two people who don't speak the same language can understand each other. It is in *le regard* that we recognize each other, that we express everything—grief, delight, unhappiness, contentment, affection, disapproval. Mikli says he finds it fascinating to play with all this in the glasses he designs.

What, then, about sunglasses and the way they mask the eyes? Mikli says yes, there are sunglasses—Ray-Ban Wayfarers, for instance—that hide the eyes, that are a uniform of sorts. Wayfarers, he finds, give everyone—men and women alike—the same aggressive expression, the same androgynous face; the individual puts them on and becomes the stereotype. Mikli has just finished designing a collection for Ray-Ban's international division—five sunglasses frames intended as a feminine alternative to the macho classics. The shapes are upswept and less severe, suggestive of the way the eyes turn up at the corners when a person smiles; the lines are curved rather than straight; and the contours are sculptural, not flat like those of the Wayfarer. Mikli says it's possible to use sunglasses to change *le regard* altogether, to give a face an entirely different expression—an expression of violence, of sensuality, of sweetness, or whatever one chooses. So that, even though the eyes are hidden, by the act of reproducing the shape of the eye in some exaggerated form sunglasses can reconstitute *le regard* and remodel the face.

Mikli grew up in Grenoble, where his mother owned a clothing store, and in Paris. He began wearing glasses at sixteen, choosing classic, rather commonplace metal frames, he recalls, in the hope that nobody would notice. He says the experience was traumatic, though probably not unlike what many people have gone through on being told that they need glasses—feeling that their appearance has been somehow disfigured, that their image of

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themselves has been violated, that their glasses come between them and others. In one of Mikli's ads from last year, a young man wears the model that Mikli calls his self-portrait—frames of shiny gold metal with a beak over the nose, like Cubist Groucho glasses. The profile matches Mikli's. "*N'avez-vous pas honte de rire d'un myope*?" the caption says.

Mikli says that he went to the Lycée Fresnel, an opticians' training school, because it was the closest school to his house in Paris. After graduation, he worked for a while in an optical shop, fitting customers for run-of-the-mill glasses that he didn't like and that the people buying them didn't seem to like, either. In time, he came to wonder where it was written that glasses had to make the people who wore them look and feel so miserable, and, in an attempt to right just one of the things wrong with the world, he began designing frames. In the eleven years since, he has worked with a number of French, British, and American fashion designers, concocting special glasses for their runway shows and, in the cases of Claude Montana and Maud Frizon, devising collections to be sold under their names.

Judith Shahn

Mikli's headquarters are on a small street in Paris's Thirteenth Arrondissement, a part of town that fashion has not yet overrun. Behind the reception desk is an enormous black-and-white photo of a jovial, mustachioed, rotund, hairy-chested man—a friend of Mikli's—wearing a sun monocle. Upstairs, in the showroom, are flat metal sculptures, like cookie cutters, of a man's face in profile, with a notch at the bridge of the nose for displaying glasses. The current collection encompasses frames in every imaginable shape and material—in plastic tortoiseshell with infusions of red, green, and black; in clear plastic containing chips of color, like a terrazzo ice rink; in plastic striped with tiny slats that are one color seen from one side, another color seen from the other. There are (for Montana) black glasses set with rhinestones, with long narrow lengths of black lycra at the temples, to wrap and tie like a scarf or a turban around the head.

For his own amusement, Mikli has over the years been experimenting with the classic round shape, the simplest and most traditional, as a way of extending the genre—as a game. The results range from round sun lenses in a ferocious-looking thick matte perforated steel frame, for Montana's men's collection; a sinister strip of white plastic, no wider than a Band-Aid, with tiny, dark, binocularlike lenses set in it; delicate, circular steel frames with spirals at the bridge and the temples, for Maud Frizon; and round lenses whose upper half is bordered with an arc of red enamelled aluminum—Mikli describes these as "*anti-mode*."

Up the street is the workshop where Mikli's prototypes are made and his archives are stored. His dog, a rambunctious black briard named Coquine, conducts him and a visitor on a tour, pausing every now and then for them to catch up. There are dozens of what Mikli calls *études*, undertaken out of sheer curiosity and never produced for sale—like the pair of black-velvet-covered frames that were part of one season's research for Montana's collection. Delving into drawers marked " '79-'80" and " '82," Mikli pulls out a phantasmagorical bright-blue plastic frame studded with rhinestones, and a pair of asymmetrical sunglasses with a rectangular lens framed in black and a triangular one framed in white—relics from what he calls the era when he was in the clouds.

Mikli talks about glasses with a vocabulary borrowed from the couture. He talks about being inspired by plastics and metals the way a designer is inspired by fabrics; he talks about using a smooth, shiny plastic, like a lining, on the inside of a pair of matte-plastic frames—something warm and *agréable* for the side that comes in contact with the skin.

Though he speaks with great respect of *créateurs* like Montana, Gaultier, and Azzedine Alaïa, he finds most fashion now rather blasé. We've seen so much, he says, and we're so critical. The tendency always is to compare what's new with what has already been done. So most designers, consciously or not, reproduce the images that are familiar to us, playing on the silhouettes and styles that have entered our common language and, in some cases, have become clichés. Mikli believes it's the past that hinders fashion today. But designing glasses is a different story. The tradition in which he works is comparatively shallow, with no counterpart of the illustrious era of the haute couture, dominated by Chanel, Dior, Balenciaga. As a result, it's easier to be innovative.

When Mikli was in school, he was given precepts—"the shape of the glasses must follow the line of the eyebrows," for instance—and for a time he followed them. Little by little, he came to realize that the rules had been deduced from what people were accustomed to seeing, that they were nothing more than formulas for the conventions. But if one wants to break the conventions, he says, there are no rules, and then everything is possible.

Mikli's ads rely on so-called real people, not actresses or rock stars or fashion models. Most of these real people are his friends; some are his employees. In a "catalogue" of black-and-white portraits by Nigel Scott, they look thoughtful, complex, peculiar, not fashionable but urbane, in a perpetual state of forward motion; these people are where it's happening, whatever it is. The idiosyncratic cast of characters is elevated by means of these pictures to a level of scrutiny usually reserved for fashion models and movie stars: this is the apotheosis of the oddball, and the by-product is another kind of glamour—the glamour of being not beautiful or famous but interesting. In these instances, the glasses serve to complicate the faces.

A WOMAN, a journalist assigned to interview a Nobel Prize-winning author, is standing in front of her closet in her bathrobe—her contact lenses in, her makeup on—frantically searching for something to wear. The phone rings. It's her boyfriend. "Wear your red suit," he says.

"Too bright," she answers.

"Well, then, your navy-blue jumpsuit."

"Not dressy enough."

"How about that black knit skirt?"

"Too sexy."

"Well," he says, and she can hear in his voice the effort it's taking him not to lose his patience, "how do you want to look?"

"Intelligent," she answers.

"Wear your glasses," he tells her.

DENNIS LEIGHT calls Oliver Peoples "a family business," "a corner store." Three years ago, he and

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his brother Larry, and Larry's wife, Cindy, and a friend from childhood, Kenneth Schwartz, decided to start an optical shop on Sunset Boulevard, in Los Angeles. About four months before the store opened, Dennis Leight got a call from a friend in New York, an antique dealer: the entire inventory of an eyeglasses distributor, which had been in storage since his death, in the thirties, had just surfaced, and the friend had bought it. Were the Leights interested? Larry Leight went to New York, took a look at the contents of a few of the dozen or so enormous cartons, and bought them all. Inside were unassembled fifty-year-old frames made of hand-tooled gold or silver, in their original wrapping. Unpacking the boxes, Dennis Leight found an old receipt made out to one "Oliver Peoples," and the four partners liked the name so much that they adopted it for their business.

The shop still has some of those old frames tucked away, but mostly Oliver Peoples sells glasses of its own design, many of them inspired by vintage models. Dennis Leight prides himself on the details: engraved patterns across the bridge and around the rim, and other old-fashioned touches, which make the glasses precious-looking, like a watch or jewelry—something to be worn with pride. There is nothing innovative or even unfamiliar here, unless it's the way materials are sometimes combined—a tortoiseshell frontpiece, for instance, with matte-black metal arms. People who want to look like movie stars will have to go elsewhere; movie stars who want to look like intellectuals go to Oliver Peoples.

After ten years in the optical business (seven of them at L.A. Eyeworks), Dennis Leight says, "I never hear people buying glasses say anymore what I used to hear them say all the time: 'Oh, these are just for the daytime, around the house or at work—I wear my *contacts* at night.' Now we get people in here who don't even need a prescription, ordering glasses with clear lenses. Sometimes they'll tell us that they're trying to look a little older for their job, or that they want to look as if they read more books, but what it usually comes down to is that they just want glasses to wear as a part of their outfit." The kid who walked around with a naked face and made fun of his four-eyed classmates has grown up to want to look like them. The revenge of the nerds.

ON a recent trip to the West Coast, shopping for sunglasses at L.A. Eyeworks with a friend: An agreeable young woman is helping us. My friend tries on one pair—black, in a cynical, squinty shape—and consults the mirror. Silence as he studies himself. The young woman leans across the counter and asks him, in a low, confidential tone, "What's going through your mind?"

LUNCH on a weekday at the Bistro Garden, in Beverly Hills: A woman dressed in the latest fashions that Rodeo Drive has to offer is waiting for her date, and he turns up at last—a man wearing a band-collared shirt, a sand-colored linen jacket, and sunglasses with reflective lenses. They order.

"Do I have to sit here and watch myself eat?" she asks.

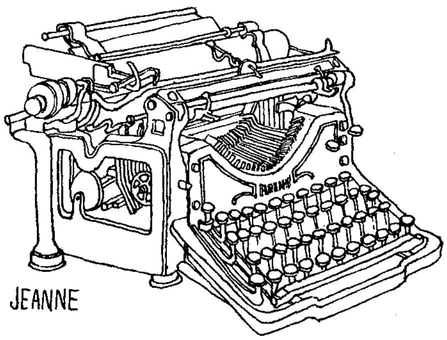
"I'd rather leave them on," he says, and, by way of explanation, lowers his sunglasses, so that she can see his eyes. The expression on his face is pained.

"Rough night?" she says.

When they've finished their cappuccino, she reaches over and draws his face close to hers. He looks surprised, then expectant, like somebody about to be kissed. She takes out her lipstick and, holding his face steady with her left hand, reapplies her red-orange mouth with her right, using his sunglasses for a mirror.

A WOMAN waiting to meet some friends at a restaurant in lower Manhattan takes a seat at the bar and orders a drink. A man wearing an Armani suit comes in and takes the seat next to her. "What's that you're reading?" he asks.

"A letter," she answers, in a tone intended to discourage further conversation.



"A love letter?" he persists.

"No," she says sourly.

"So tell me," he continues, "what do you do?"

"I'm a police officer," she replies, not entirely convincingly.

"No kidding," he says, looking at her legs.

"No kidding," she says, looking around for someplace else to wait. She consults her watch. Where are her friends? It's already fifteen minutes past their reservation. People are standing two deep at the bar.

"There's nowhere else to go," the man beside her says triumphantly.

"No, I guess there isn't," she replies, and, reaching into her bag, she pulls out her sunglasses and puts them on.

A TRAVELLER with some time on his hands at the San Francisco airport this past spring might have browsed through an exhibition on the departures level of the international terminal called "The Eyes Have It: A History of Eyewear from the 1700s to Present Day" and sponsored by the San Francisco Airports Commission, and seen these things:

A pair of round iron spectacles with bottle-green lenses, American, circa 1750.

A pair of tiny oval tortoiseshell frames, the kind currently popular with people in the forefront of the fashion business—dated 1790.

Very funky-looking spectacles made of tortoiseshell, brass, and glass, with a high-arched bridge and low sidepieces, from China, circa 1800.

Early Eskimo snow goggles of whalebone and sinew.

Wire-rimmed figure-eight-shaped glasses with cobalt-blue lenses, mid-nineteenth century.

Photographs of Cary Grant as Barnaby Fulton in "Monkey Business," 1952, wearing thick lenses that look like the optical equivalent of orthopedic shoes, and of Marilyn Monroe as Pola in "How to Marry a Millionaire," a year later, wearing rhinestone-studded cat's-eye glasses, a hat with a veil, and a mink collar.

A chart used to test the vision of children who don't yet know the alphabet. Twenty-twenty: green star, yellow plus sign, red circle, blue heart, green flag.

Various glasses from the L.A. Eyeworks museum collection, including a pair of black plastic frames in the shape of two sixteenth notes, and a rhinestone-encrusted pair, in the shape of a butterfly, with two jewelled antennae extending upward from the bridge—both pairs made in France, sometime in the late forties.

A brief introduction to two displays of recent, one-of-a-kind glasses, reading, "UNIQUE DESIGN EYEWEAR presents a further departure from the conventions of eyewear to eyewear as sculpture. Embellishing on blank frames, designers have created narrative, figurative, architectural and decorative works in mixed media, and have established an iconography of eyewear." The items on display were identified in museum-style captions, such as

> LINDA HESH
> Dinner Time, 1988
> Frame: Goa by l.a.Eyeworks
> Engraved spring steel,
> sterling silver spoon
> and fork, grey sun lenses

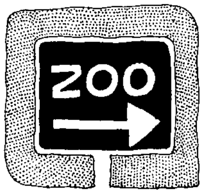
and

> THOMAS MANN
> Untitled, 1987
> Frame: Gigantor by l.a.Eyeworks
> Sandblasted carved black plastic,
> powder painted black chassis,
> hand laminated plastic, zinc screws,
> brass washers, prismatic plastic
> lenses.

THE opening-night party for "Dirty Dancing" in New York, two summers ago: After the screening, the guests proceed to Roseland, where a crowd has gathered on the sidewalk to watch them make their way to the door. The director—not yet famous—gets out of his limo in the company of three not even potentially famous friends, one of whom is wearing sunglasses. "Is that somebody?" a woman standing at the curb asks her friend.

WHEN Gai Gherardi and Barbara McReynolds founded L.A. Eyeworks, in 1979, they presented it in their ads as an optical shop selling eyeglasses from the fifties, sixties, and eighties. "We didn't even *acknowledge* the seventies," McReynolds says. The seventies, in their opinion, was when the theretofore distinguished history of eyewear design took a nosedive. Although they confess to having participated wholeheartedly for a time in the seventies look, by 1979 they were finding it ugly, if not ridiculous—an opinion from which they have not wavered.

One summer afternoon, they are in the office, the back room at the store—McReynolds, who has shoulder-length gray hair, wearing a black knit dress, a black-and-white striped jacket, and matte-black eyeglasses, and Gherardi, plump, wearing a black-on-beige tattersall dress and yellow tartan frames. Amid the clutter on the desk are: Polaroids of the store's ads; a miniature green felt sombrero trimmed with silver sequins; a red plastic yo-yo; a goldfish bowl filled with big white shooter marbles commemorating the store's tenth anniversary ("l.a.Eyeworks," the marbles say. "Est. 1979"); a silver bowl, like a shipwrecked serving dish, with little plastic people hanging over the sides; and an arch made of a hollowed-out half of a tree trunk, under which five small frogs huddle in a pyramid, breathing in unison. At night, Gherardi says, when all the people are gone, the frogs come out and jump around the office.



Gherardi and McReynolds were friends in high school, in Huntington Beach, California (McReynolds played guitar with Gherardi's boyfriend), but then went their separate ways until 1968, when Gherardi was between jobs, thinking about becoming an architect, she says, and McReynolds asked her to come help out in the optical shop where she was working, at the University of California at Irvine. Gherardi was soon converted to optometry, but they also used the shop for draft dodgers' meetings and other political activities. Gherardi says that for both of them the optical business has been a vehicle for expressing themselves. The places they worked were not your standard, neighborhood opticians.

"No," McReynolds says. "There was always rebel work going on."

By 1979, McReynolds and Gherardi had had enough of the big white Emanuelle Khanh sunglasses that covered the face like a windshield, enough of glasses that were jewelled or monogrammed or emblazoned with the wearer's sign of the zodiac—although, Gherardi says now, all those things were necessary at the time, to get people to stop thinking about glasses as a prosthesis and start thinking about them as fashion. During the formative stages of L.A. Eyeworks, at the height of the signature-eyewear boom, McReynolds and Gherardi laid down a few rules for themselves: no names and no logos on the outside of the frames; no "faceted-glass" lenses (the rimless, bevelled look); no Optyl, the injection-molded plastic that had been so rapturously received by the optical industry; no sidepieces coming from the bottom of the rims; no Porsche Carrera sunglasses, even though they were then one of the best-selling sunglasses in the country. "That left us with not a whole lot to choose from, one would think," Gherardi says. "Obviously, we couldn't just go and buy from our local salesman." They went to Europe and brought back frames from Alain Mikli and other designers they found there. They made the rounds of manufacturers, saying, McReynolds recalls, " 'Show us your worst-seller.' What everybody else was buying we didn't want. What we were looking for no one else wanted."

"So we put together a very generic kind of statement," Gherardi continues. "We took those kinds of frames, and we dyed them, we sandblasted them, we mirrored their lenses—we did all sorts of things to them. We also left them as themselves. And we presented them in a whole new context."

"We took the frame your grandfather wore, with a gold or silver chassis," McReynolds says, "but instead of presenting it on a sixty-five-year-old man we presented it on a beautiful twenty-two-year-old model."

Gherardi adds, "We took a pair of glasses you'd seen on Henry Kissinger for twenty years and put them on a great-looking guy, and all of a sudden they looked really nice, really appealing. Also, the time was pretty exciting: 1980 was dawning, clothing was looking interesting. The face was much more in celebration than it had been before—it wasn't covered with miles of hair. Off went the sideburns, out came the cheekbones—and there was this mass of face."

From the outset, L.A. Eyeworks offered a range of colors (twenty-two in the first collection alone) in addition to the ubiquitous black and tortoiseshell. The frames have mostly been

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small. "We put glasses back on the face," McReynolds says. "We wanted them to be able to accentuate, and not take away from, what a person is." The result may be most apparent in the store's ad campaign, which over the past eight years has featured a series of high-contrast black-and-white portraits of celebrities like Andy Warhol, Jody Watley, Eric Roberts, Chaka Khan, Pee-wee Herman, Vanessa Williams, David Hockney, Grace Jones, Bryan Ferry, Jodie Foster, Divine, Greg Louganis, and the Kipper Kids, all wearing L.A. Eyeworks glasses, always with the same tag line: "A face is like a work of art. It deserves a great frame." The frames in these pictures are an integral part of the faces: the glasses aren't barriers between the people wearing them and the world. This is a long way from the seventies ad campaign that also featured famous people wearing sunglasses, and asked, "Isn't that you behind those Foster Grants?" The people in the L.A. Eyeworks ads, though most of them are wearing sunglasses, aren't wearing them as something to hide behind, as a disguise. The old notion of glasses as sexual camouflage is finally obsolete: a woman no longer needs to wait for the man who realizes that underneath her glasses is a stunning creature just longing to get out. Yet there's still something sexy about glasses: like clothes, they're there to be taken off.

I ask Gherardi and McReynolds whether they believe that it is possible for a frame to bring out a face's good features, and, if so, whether some people might not actually look better with glasses than without them. "That's so loaded," Gherardi answers. "That's such a loaded question. Yes."

McReynolds explains, "See, we see it the same way as clothes. It's a look, it's a feel for the moment, it's not permanent. It's like when you go to your closet in the morning: Am I going to wear black today? Should I wear a color? What color lipstick? Should I wear jewelry today? Am I in my gold mood? My silver mood? Should I wear my green glasses? It's the same thing, and it can change, like your eye makeup, your clothes, your shoes. For us, the essence of it always is that we just want people to feel *good* in their glasses."

"When I say that's a loaded question," Gherardi goes on, "I mean, who wants to kiss with glasses on? There are times when it's just nicer to see a face as it came on the earth. But then there are all those other times—you're wearing this or that, you're doing something, you need to see. And then, yes, you really can accentuate a feature—you really can shorten a nose, or give someone a browline, or make a face with a very square jawline look longer."

The notion of wearing glasses with fashionable clothes—a notion that designers like Christian Lacroix and Giorgio Armani promoted even before they had eyewear collections in their own names—is, McReynolds and Gherardi say, what they've been advocating all along. The glasses contradict the vanity that the clothes imply. The clothes may elevate the person wearing them to a dazzling level of sophistication and style; the glasses bring that person back down to the realm of human imperfections. The glasses are worn ironically. They are the wearer's way of telling the world, "I'm not just your average pretty person, not a fashion victim or a fashion plate—I'm doing all this intentionally." Gherardi says, "I can walk around in plaid glasses—and I am a *huge* girl—because that's how I make the point that I'm not some housewife from Ohio, that there's a little edge to me, somehow. And I don't even care if anybody else notices—it's just my own edge, that I need to put on for myself."

FOUR years ago, on one of those intoxicating early-spring days that look and feel like summer, at L.A. Eyeworks: Some twelve customers are stationed in front of the mirrors, trying on one pair of sunglasses after another, engrossed in new permutations of their own faces. The door opens, and a young man wearing jeans and a T-shirt with the call letters of a radio station printed across the chest enters and announces to whom it may concern, "Hey, Bruce Springsteen, headed this way!" The customers leave their mirrors and crowd close to the window. Moments later, sure enough, Springsteen strolls into view. In front of the store, he slows his pace and turns his head to look in the window, and there he sees, behind the display, a chorus of a dozen people, all wearing sunglasses, staring back at him.

—HOLLY BRUBACH

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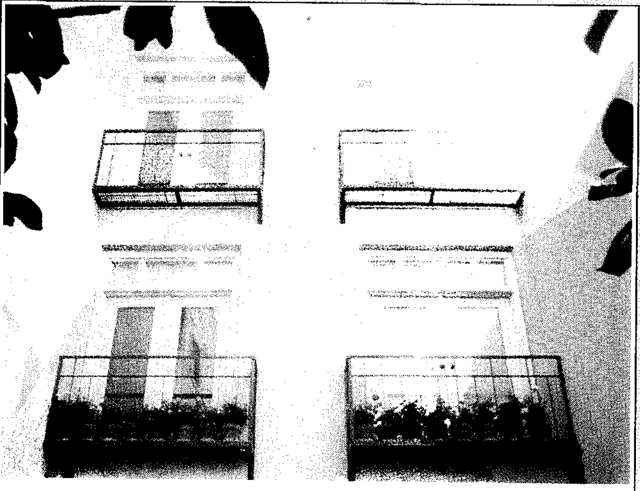

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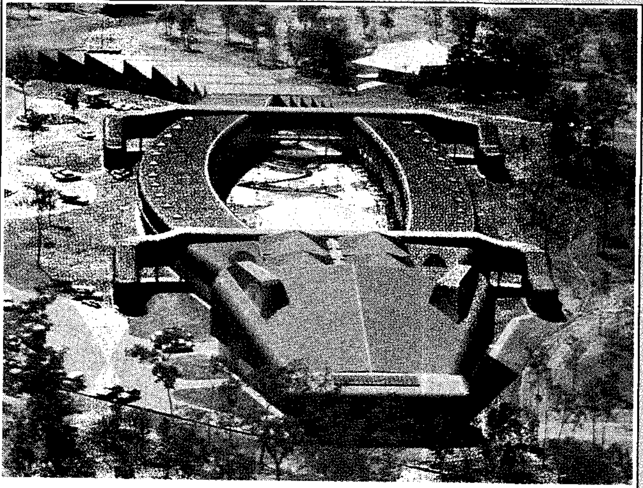

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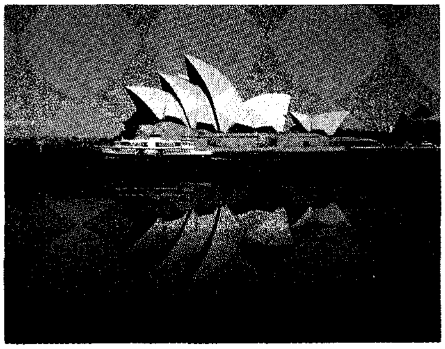

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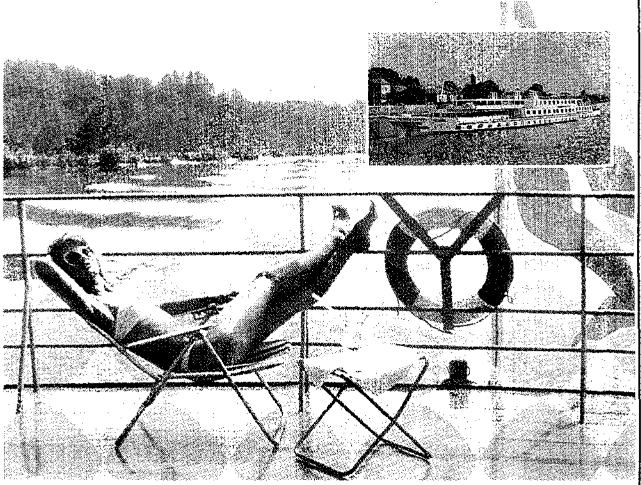

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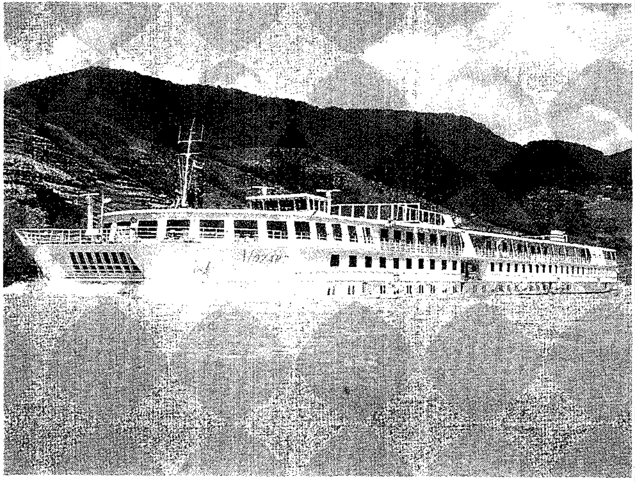

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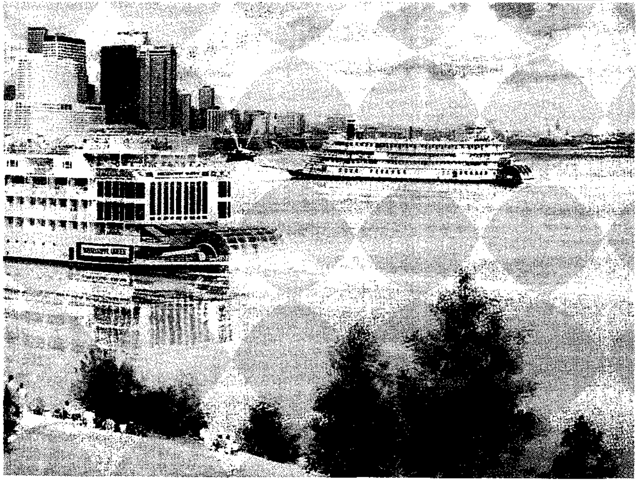

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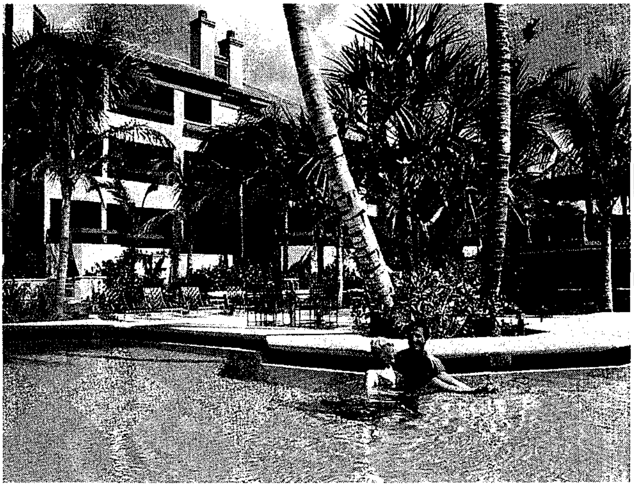

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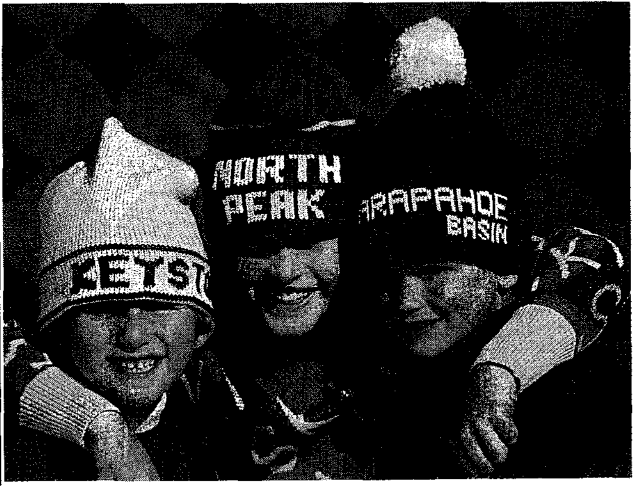

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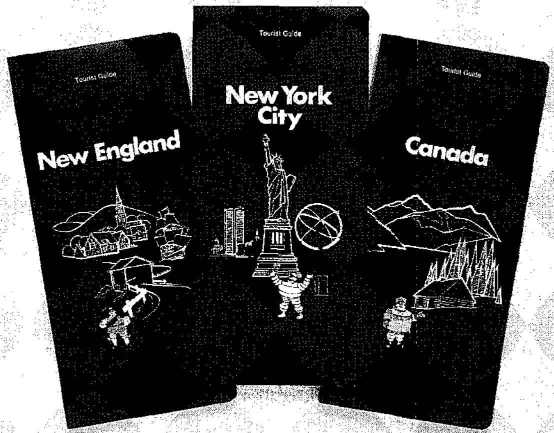

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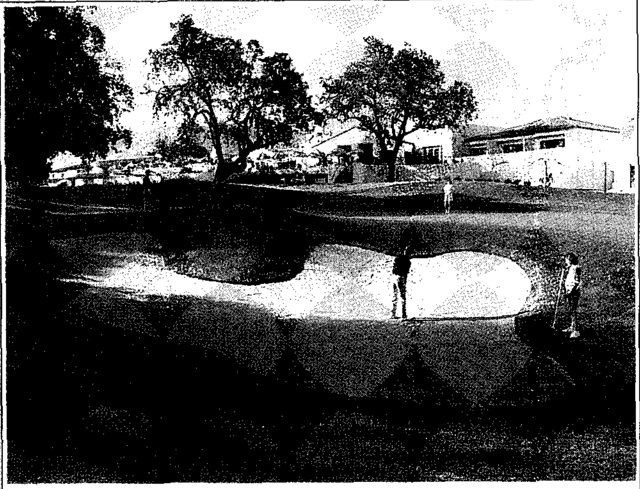

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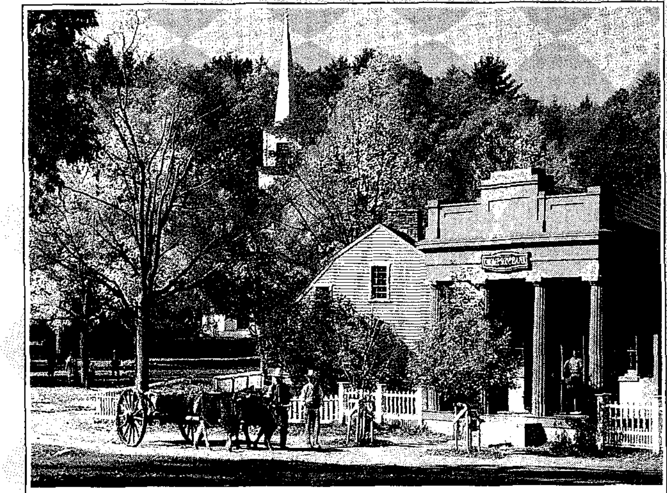

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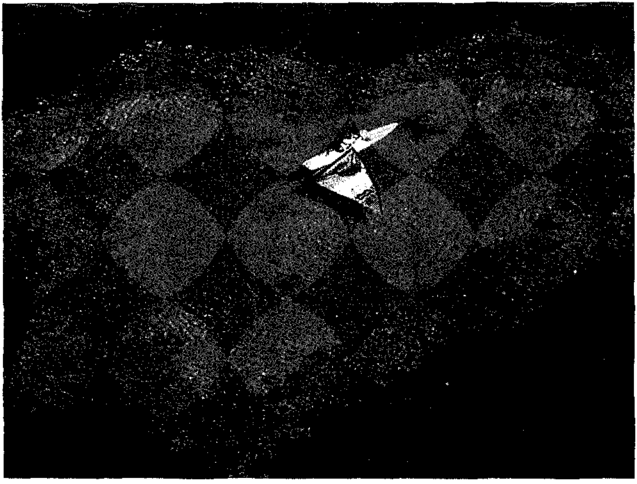

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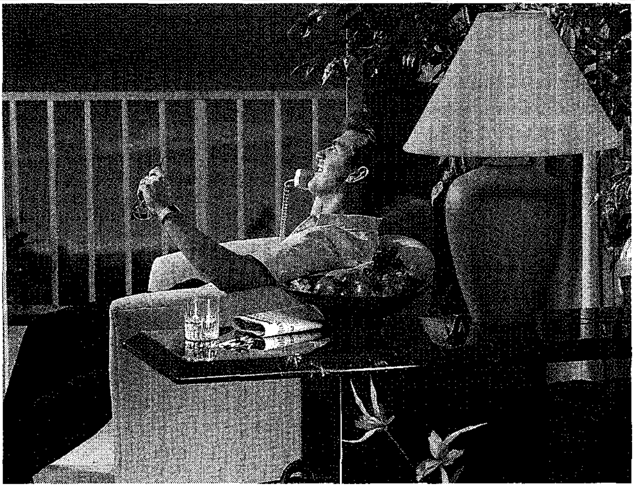

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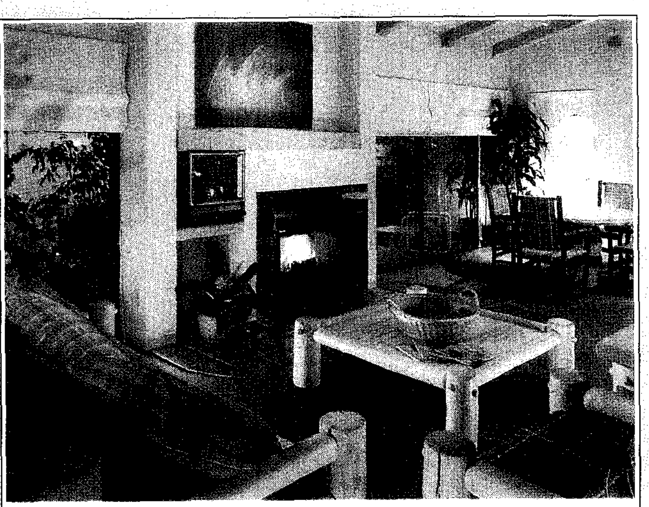

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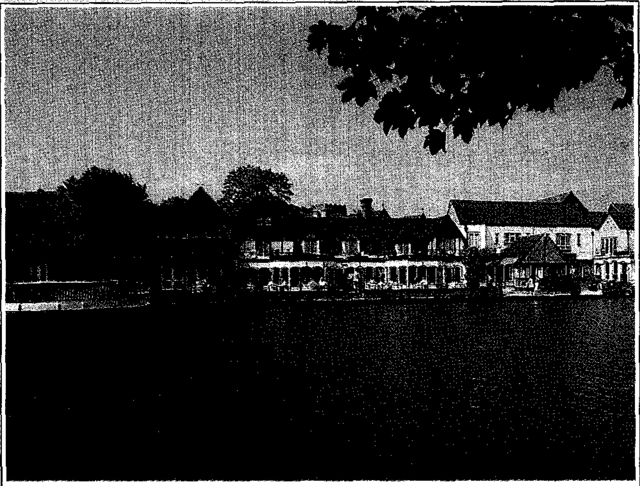

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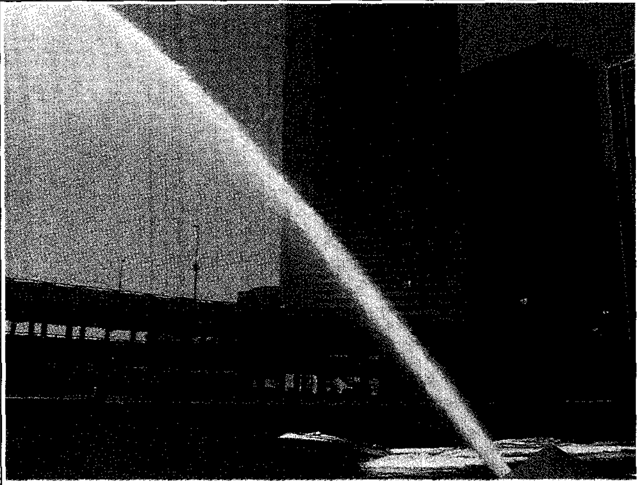

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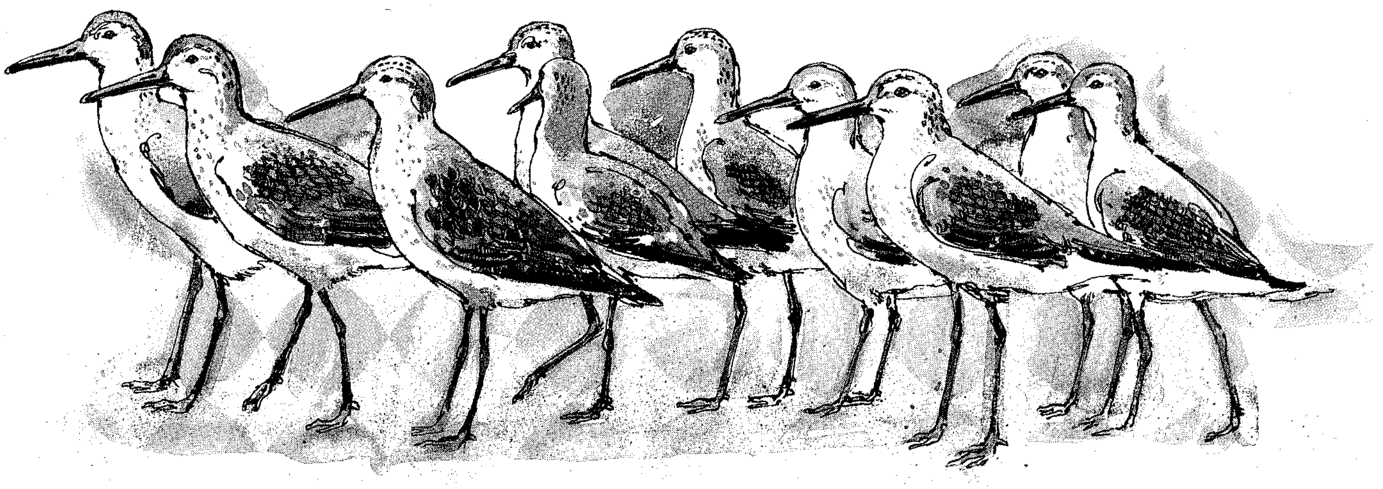

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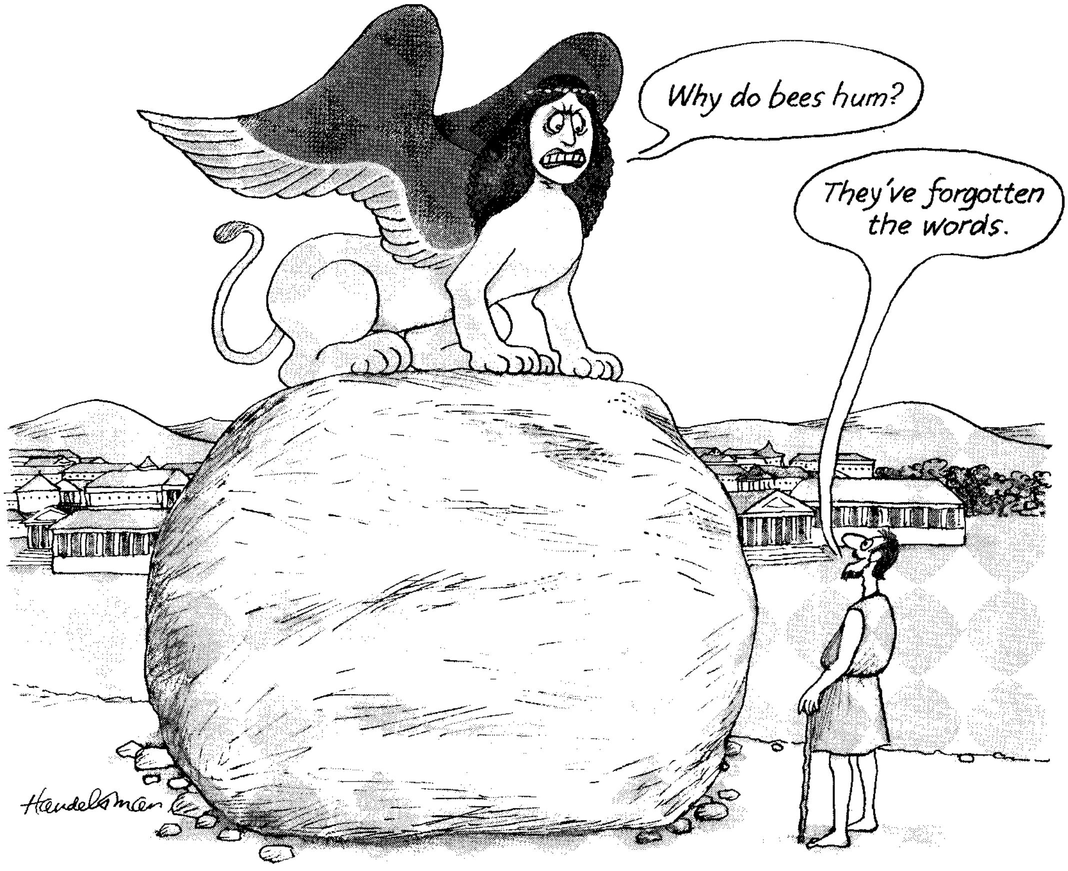
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

AUGUST 17

THIS session of Congress, now in its August recess, has thus far been relatively productive, even if what it has produced is largely irrelevant. Given the way each chamber started out, it is surprising they have done as much as they have. The bitter struggles over John Tower's nomination to be Secretary of Defense and Jim Wright's fate have been, if not forgotten, largely subdued—through the efforts of the Democratic leaders in both chambers and acts of will on the part of many members who thought that things were getting out of hand. But since in the absence of Presidential leadership Congress won't take on the most pressing, and oppressive, issue of the day—the budget deficit—most of what it has done constitutes nibbling at the edges of our national problems. In fact, its grappling with two issues—capital gains and catastrophic health insurance—represents retreats from actions it took in the past few years. So there has been a certain amount of congressional marching up the hill and then marching down again. The Democratic leadership in both chambers is still groping for a formula for dealing with President Bush: for how and when to oppose him, and how to get their own message across. Actually, they are groping for a message.

It's never easy for the opposition party, even when it controls Congress, to come up with a coherent message, and traditionally the Democrats, being a more heterogeneous group, have even more trouble with this than the Republicans do. Moreover, the congressional Democrats are becoming increasingly aware of and frustrated by the Bush people's skill at showing the President to great advantage, and at eluding hard questions. Both Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell and House Speaker Thomas Foley are still finding their footing, but in both cases most Democrats—and even many Republicans—consider them a welcome improvement over what had gone before. Both men are intelligent and articulate, and the Democrats no longer wince when their leaders appear on television. In both cases, the change in leadership was more generational than philosophical. In both chambers, members of both parties feel that they are being dealt with more openly and fairly than before. Mitchell, who was elected to the post last November, has done much to improve what some senators call their "quality of life," by trying to have the Senate work more reasonable and predictable hours. (This was among Mitchell's campaign pledges.) So as to assure predictable and ample time with the home folks—especially for those senators up for reëlection—the Senate now works roughly three weeks on and one week off (sometimes two off); but there are still plenty of other recesses, and little voting on Mondays and Fridays. Both Mitchell and Foley have made efforts to be conciliatory and inclusive (thus keeping egos soothed). Both are characterized as "cautious," a trait that has its advantages as well as disadvantages, but Mitchell is even more cautious than Foley. And both are engaged in the Democrats' search for meaning.

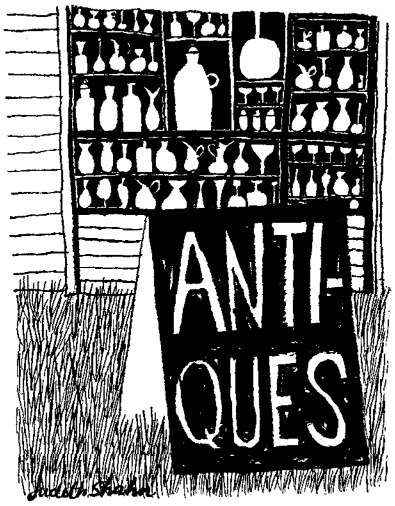
SOME Democrats think that a theme arises out of taking Bush on on certain legislative issues, but some analysts think that the Democrats see the legislative process as a solution in itself rather than think through how to use the process to get their message across. Some Democratic senators think that the thing to do is pass legislation that Bush will veto—putting into question his determination to have a "kinder and gentler" nation. But one Democratic analyst says the legislation doesn't always convey the impression its backers wish to create—that instead it conveys the impression that the Democrats simply want to spend money. A task force of Democratic senators was recently constituted under James Sasser, of Tennessee, to "coördinate the message" and develop themes, but as yet they have little idea what the message and themes would be. On the House side, the job of developing a message has been given to Richard Gephardt, of Missouri, the new Majority Leader. As a Presidential candidate last year, Gephardt was


Why do bees hum?
They've forgotten the words.
Handelsman

Oedipus Solves the Riddle of the Sphinx fairly effective at developing messages, even if they did tend to change. Now he has in mind one similar to his basic campaign theme: one that stresses "competitiveness," of "building America back." But it's not clear that a theme along these lines—which would involve, as Gephardt's campaign did, tough talk on trade, or could suggest the spending of money—will be acceptable to other House Democrats. Democrats in both chambers are frustrated by Bush's ability to use symbols and speeches to convey that he is dealing with big problems—even when he is dealing in empty gestures. Bush proposed sending a manned mission to Mars—sometime—with no money behind the proposal. Office of Management and Budget Director Richard Darman, who is all for the Mars program, says that it will eventually cost more than four hundred billion dollars. Some Democrats hope they can establish the theme that Bush is talk but no substance, but this strategy has its pitfalls. Sasser says, "There's a sense of missed opportunities on our part." Gephardt says, "Bush has an empty promise for every problem, because he lacks the fiscal foundation for real promises." He adds, "But he is able to be on TV sitting with troubled kids, single parents, or whatever, and showing concern—that he cares about these problems. In the politics of perception, he's as good as, if not better than, Ronald Reagan." But the Democrats have a fiscal-foundation problem, too.

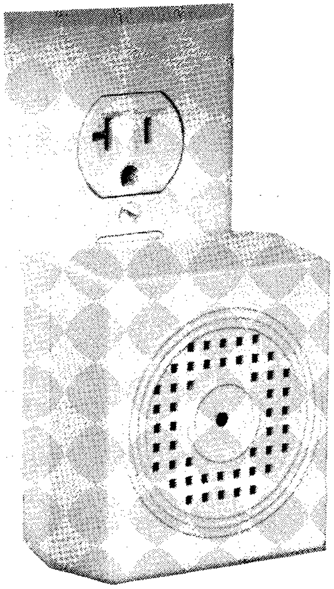
If the Democrats are to appear to stand for anything much, they need more consensus than they now have—however difficult that may be. They will have to find some issues that identify them—but their own internal differences and Bush's skill at coöpting potential Democratic issues are making that quite difficult. Right now, the one issue on which they are most clearly identified is the House leaders' opposition to Bush's proposal for a cut in the capital gains tax—but in that, as in a number of cases, the Democrats are being reactive, and in that particular instance they are not only opposing the President but also fighting a rear-guard action against some of their own troops. Mitchell, new to a leadership role, has had to spend a fair amount of time gaining mastery of the Senate's exceedingly intricate rules, as well as establishing his working relationships with his Democratic colleagues—and the Republican leader, Robert Dole. In both chambers, much of the Democratic leadership's time is spent putting out fires (or trying to)—as in their effort to block a constitutional amendment outlawing "desecration" of the flag. Foley, who came to his job in June, six months after Mitchell did, had spent a good amount of time as an understudy, and was well prepared (despite reaching the job before he had expected to), but he still has had to work out his relationships with other Democratic powers in the House. And though Mitchell's fellow Democratic senators, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, praise him—they're very happy with the degree to which he consults with them—one senses a certain amount of restiveness on the part of Democrats within as well as outside the Senate.

Some of the restiveness stems from Mitchell's style, and some from the political situation the Democrats are in. Mitchell, for all his intelligence and cordiality, hasn't brought to his new Senate role the panache and the voice—the leadership—that many Democrats had hoped for. Numerous Democrats outside the Senate who expected Mitchell to show leadership in his new position see instead something unimaginative and constricted. It's a bit unrealistic to expect congressional leaders to be rock stars, and many positions they might take would alienate some of their followers, but Democrats, in Congress and out, want their party to stand for *something*. Because Mitchell has had a longer time in his new position, more time to give it definition, and because Foley conveys surer political instincts, the disappointment Democrats express thus far is with Mitchell. (Foley, who enjoys excellent relations with the press and is highly popular in Washington, has a long line of credit. But, given the way fashions change here, his time could come.) Mitchell is, in fact, a cautious man; in the Iran-Contra hearings, he was among the committee members who took fright at the apparent—and much overestimated—ground swell of public support of Oliver North, and backed off putting hard questions to him. Instead, Mitchell and other committee Democrats sought to assure the television audience, by way of little speeches to North, that they were patriots, too. (Though new information—raising new questions—about the Iran-Contra affair has surfaced, Mitchell has in effect shut down further congressional inquiry into the subject. In this instance, he was acting on the consensus of his colleagues. Democratic senators actually spoke among themselves about the danger of taking action that could lead to the impeachment of Bush—and the accession of Dan Quayle to the Presidency.) Now Mitchell takes the occasional swipe at Bush, but without enough consistency or interestingness to make it catch on, or be memorable. Mitchell has helped bring about Senate passage of certain pieces of legislation—on child care, on the minimum wage—but there is no shape or definition to what has been done so far. Earlier this year, at Mitchell's behest, the Senate Democratic Conference (composed of all the Democratic senators) came up with a legislative agenda, but, as is often the case with such collective enterprises, in being general enough to please most of the Party's factions in the Senate it was so vague as to lack much meaning. A Democratic activist, speaking about his own disappointment with Mitchell, said recently, "The only explanation is he's been solidifying his internal base and later will go public. It's the only explanation I can think of, but it doesn't do much good for the grass roots."



Mitchell and Foley reflect and reinforce the Democrats' fear of the label of tax-and-spenders. The feeling isn't unanimous, but certainly predominates, that the Democrats shouldn't move to raise taxes unless the President is right there with them. But at least Foley is more straightforward about it. He also says that not only the President but his roughneck political operatives—Republican National Chairman Lee Atwater, and Ed Rollins, the head of the National Republican Congressional Committee—have to take the pledge not to attack the Democrats if they join the President in raising taxes. Earlier this year, Rollins, whose job it is to get more Republicans elected to the House, said that if Congress voted new taxes he'd use that against the Democrats in the 1990 elections even if the White House had agreed to the taxes. Mitchell explains that there is little use in the Senate's voting to raise taxes, since there would not be the votes to override a Presidential veto. It may be good politics at the moment to adhere to the President's formulation of no new taxes, but it puts the Democrats (as well as the country) in a vise. Real national needs—schools, parks, roads, bridges, health care, jails, to name a few—aren't being addressed. One of the odd aspects of this moment in our politics is the disjunction between what is being said and what is being done. The President says repeatedly (as do others) that "the money isn't there"—for almost whatever is suggested, by him and by others—but then vast sums are committed, as they apparently must be, to bail out the savings and loans, or fix the nuclear-warhead-materials plants. Each of these enterprises will in itself eventually cost about two hundred billion dollars.

Some Senate Democrats are fairly open in expressing their frustration with what Congress hasn't done. Bill Bradley, of New Jersey, says, "I think the Congress reflects the President's sense of urgency about a lot of major issues—especially the budget deficit." Dale Bumpers, of Arkansas, says, "We're not doing anything. The Senate has either consciously or unconsciously decided that the deficit's not important." He continues, "It's my sense that the Senate has given up on the deficit, which is our No. 1 problem. The partisan lines are firmly drawn here. We're frozen—this place is absolutely frozen. Some of it's indifference, but most of it is fear." Bumpers says, "The thirty-second television spot is driving this place." In June, Kent Conrad, a freshman Democratic senator from North Dakota, told me, "I've been disappointed, because I believed we should have taken the President's budget and sent it back to him and told him it didn't meet the needs of the country. It's time to reprioritize. By



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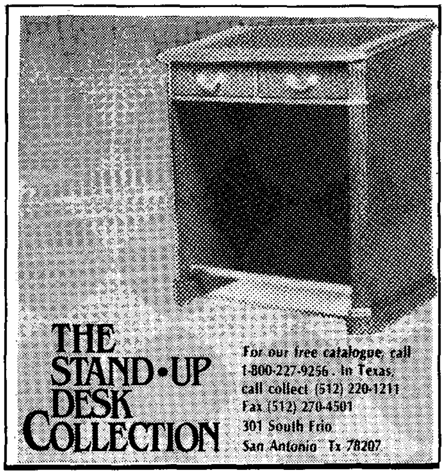

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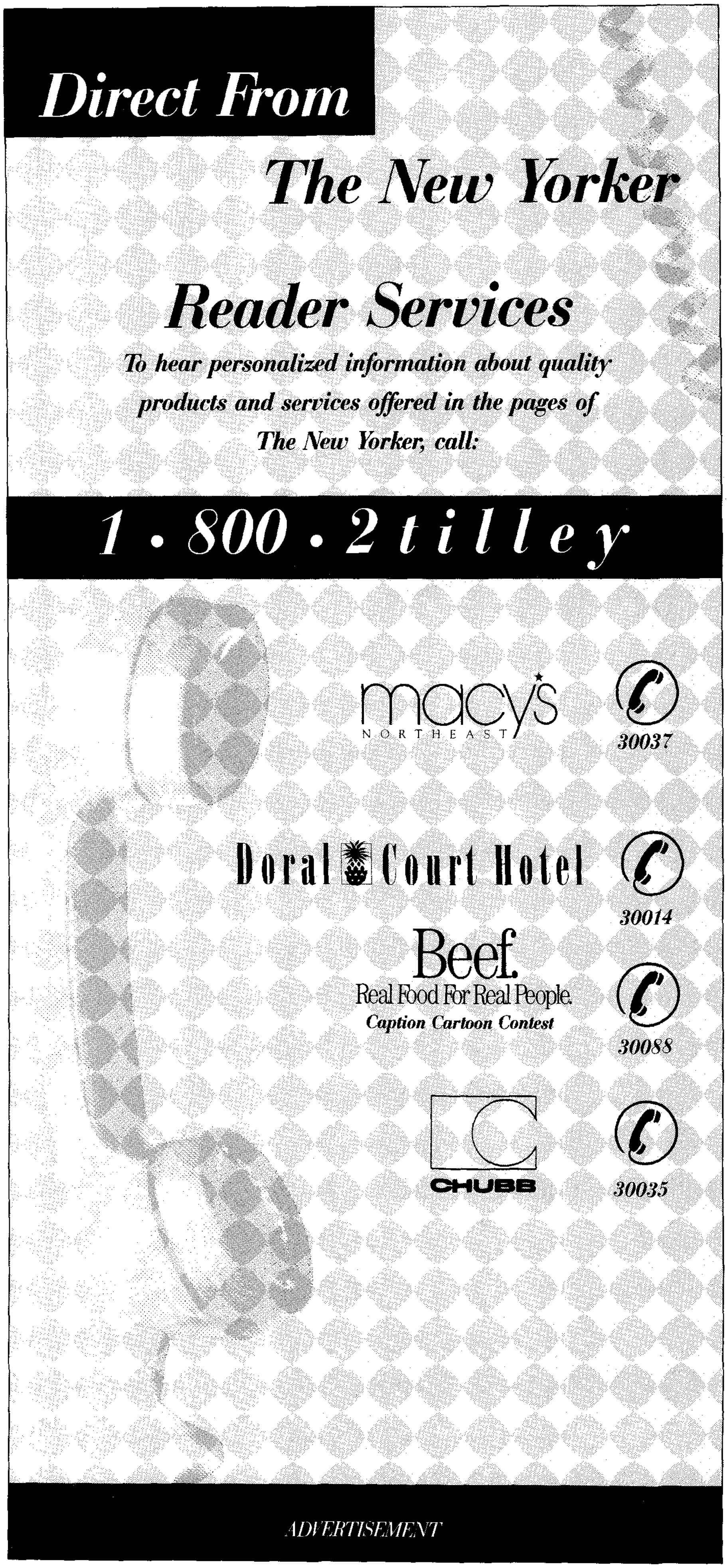
going along with Bush's budget we've given a confused picture of what is important."

Some Democrats are finding ways to work around the current political restrictions—sometimes running into blockades set up by their colleagues. Senator Edward M. Kennedy, of Massachusetts, has thought through new approaches to dealing with one of our most severe domestic problems—the lack of educated and trained youth—without spending great sums of federal money. Some Democrats have been trying to put the President on the spot on drugs, pointing out that last year's anti-drug bill has never been fully funded—$2.8 billion was authorized, but only $1 billion had been appropriated. When Senator Joseph Biden, of Delaware, proposed to the Democratic caucus that the Democrats support a move to fully fund last year's bill, some of his more powerful colleagues weren't interested, and Robert Byrd, of West Virginia, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, was opposed, as was the Administration. When the Senate, on August 1st, was debating the authorization bill for the Defense Department, Tom Harkin, of Iowa, proposed that four hundred and fifty million dollars be taken from the funds for S.D.I., or Star Wars, and be used to fight the drug war, but he was opposed by Sam Nunn, of Georgia, who as Armed Services Committee chairman was the manager of the bill. Some Democrats thought "Drug Wars instead of Star Wars" would have a nice ring. Nunn, working with other Democrats, proposed that instead $1.7 billion for the war against drugs be taken from as yet unobligated funds for this year throughout the federal government. The proposal, which carried, gave the President the right to spend the money but didn't require him to. "That was a great chance for the Party," a Democratic senator said afterward, sorrowfully. But the Democrats were dealing largely in symbols: over twenty billion dollars has already been spent by the federal government to combat drugs, with little knowledge of where the money has gone and no consensus on what works.

Nonetheless, some Democrats plan to try to put the anti-drug funds in the budget in the fall, after it wouldn't be counted against the Gramm-Rudman deficit ceiling for this year. One curious aspect of the basically dumb Gramm-Rudman law is that after October 15th, when the final "snapshot" is taken to see whether Congress has stayed under the required ceiling—so that across-the-board cuts, or "sequestration," don't have to take place—Congress can spend its heart out and not have that count against the Gramm-Rudman limit for that fiscal year. Of course, it does add to both the deficit and the national debt, on which interest must be paid—and which is the heart of the problem. This was the device that the Administration and Congress resorted to just before the recess, when a spat developed over how to account for the first fifty billion dollars to be spent on the savings and loan bailout plan. The Administration wanted to fund all of it through bonds that would not be counted in the budget at all; Democrats objected, because this would end up costing more (about five billion dollars more) and because they didn't want to make it any easier for Bush to continue to elude the issue of taxes. When the proposal agreed to in a conference of Senate and House members was to put the whole thing "on budget" but simply not count it against Gramm-Rudman, both the Administration and Senator Phil Gramm, Republican of Texas and one of the co-authors of the law, objected. The President threatened to veto the final bill if all the expenditures were counted in the budget. In the end, the baby was cut in two—forty per cent on the budget, sixty per cent off. But not to worry about Gramm-Rudman: the "on budget" funds are counted as part of the fiscal 1989 budget, but the final snapshot for that was taken last October, so everyone can pretend that the money isn't really being spent.

WITH the Democrats having got themselves into a terrible muddle over the capital gains issue, and the Administration trying to decide how much of a victory it wants, the issue has been put off until September. When Bush in February, fulfilling one of his few specific campaign pledges, proposed a cut in the capital gains tax, the accepted wisdom was that the proposal would go nowhere. Leading Democrats were against it; it would likely lose revenue in the long run; and it violated the fundamental idea of the Tax Reform Act of 1986. In that law, the top rates on taxes were substantially reduced, in exchange for the elimination of various tax breaks—most especially the capital gains differential. Aside from providing more equity, the removal of the capital gains differential would eliminate tax shelters, at the time a widespread (and unproductive to society) means of lowering one's taxes. House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski, Democrat of Illinois, and some of his associates were relieved that the press coverage said that the President's initiative was dead in the water; their calculation—which turned out to be on the mark—was that if all the committee's Republicans and its five conservative Democrats supported a capital gains break, as they were likely to, the President's proposal, or something like it, only needed one more vote to carry in the committee. An associate of Rostenkowski's says, "We hoped that as Bush and Darman read in the papers that it was a nonstarter they'd think it was." But that turned out to be too much to hope for. Moreover, committee member Ed Jenkins, Democrat of Georgia and a shrewd maneuverer, offered his own proposal, which broadened the President's to include breaks for gains in commercial real estate and timber, thus making it more attractive to other Democrats. Further, to deal with the argument that though a capital gains break might bring in revenue in the short run—as people engaged in more transactions than they might have (if they did)—it would lose in the longer run because people would be paying lower taxes, Jenkins proposed that the break only last for two years. However, the likelihood that the break, once reinstated, would be removed again is not great. Some House Democrats see the two-year proposal as a marvellous vehicle for raising campaign funds.

In early June, Rostenkowski floated the idea that he might support a capital gains break, but later backed off after the majority of Democrats on his committee opposed his move. An aide says that Rostenkowski realized he was in a vulnerable position and wanted to see what kind of deal he could get from the President, but some committee Democrats suspected that Rostenkowski was playing footsie with his buddy the President. (Bush used to serve on the Ways and Means Committee, and an unlikely but strong friendship has developed between the New England aristocrat and the Chicago pol—to the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point that Rostenkowski was known to be pulling for Bush in the 1988 election.) The President had offered his proposal as a means of raising the revenues needed for cutting the budget deficit, but eventually the Ways and Means Committee found other methods of raising the required $5.3 billion. Though most of the committee's Democrats would have none of the capital gains break, the five Southern or conservative Democrats on the committee, plus Andrew Jacobs, Democrat of Indiana and a maverick, lined up with Jenkins, so, what with the Republicans, there was a majority for a capital gains break.

In mid-July, Foley came out strongly against a cut in the capital gains tax. So did Gephardt, as well as other key House Democrats. Some House Democrats believe that Foley was egged on by Gephardt, or that Foley is using the issue to establish that he will indeed take a strong stand on some things, but he gives every sign of believing what he says. Foley is a man of calm temperament, easygoing, but he can react strongly when pushed too far and is capable of making a political fight. Gephardt, who with Foley's blessing is to be more partisan than Foley, also had his own stake in the capital gains fight. Though he was a co-author of the original tax-reform plan (the Bradley-Gephardt proposal), he sort of faded from view when the tax-reform bill was before the House, and Rostenkowski, not exactly a born reformer, got the credit for shepherding the bill through the House. Now Gephardt could show that he is a reformer —maybe more of one than Rostenkowski. Foley not only opposed the capital gains break, he stated firmly that he would "join the no-new-taxes crowd" if the President chose to "slam dunk" a break through Congress, and the President could count him out when it came to finding revenues for the next budget agreement—if, as many people assume (perhaps not correctly), the President wants to raise taxes for the next year's budget. (Actually, Darman had hoped to be fairly far along by now in reaching a bipartisan agreement on next year's budget—which will require a substantial reduction in the deficit. But, what with all the trouble with finishing the work on this year's budget, Darman's dream hasn't come to pass.)

So the Administration had to calculate how badly it wanted the capital gains break as opposed to how much it wanted to alienate Foley. There ensued a multiparty negotiation: Rostenkowski negotiating with the conservative Democrats on a possible compromise, perhaps indexation of the capital gains tax, so that people wouldn't have to pay taxes on increased values that resulted from inflation—but the conservatives weren't very interested, since they had the votes; the Administration negotiating with Rostenkowski, and also with the Republicans, who weren't very interested in compromising, since they had the votes; and various parties negotiating with the House leadership. Just before Congress departed for its August recess, all sorts of schemes were being floated for compromising on the issue. Democrats were divided over whether it would be better to take the issue to the House floor and lose, but lose purely, or to try to win through a compromise. Since Ways and Means had found the necessary $5.3 billion in revenues for this year's budget, the leadership felt in no hurry to bring the capital gains issue before the House. However, the votes could well be there for a capital gains break.

The leadership could try to use the rules in such a way as to prevent a cut in capital gains from coming to a House vote, and there is some talk that even if the President prevailed in the House the Senate would stop the capital gains break. Lloyd Bentsen, Democrat of Texas and chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, who has in the past been a champion of the capital gains differential, has flatly stated that he wouldn't support it now unless Congress also raised the top income-tax rate that the wealthiest people pay. For reasons not worth going into, the ostensible top rate of twenty-eight per cent rises at certain income levels to thirty-three per cent, and then, at the next income level, goes back down to twenty-eight per cent. This so-called bubble is covetously eyed by numerous people as a place to raise taxes on the wealthiest—in other words, once people started paying at thirty-three per cent they would keep paying at that rate. Despite the fact that getting rid of the "bubble" wouldn't raise a great deal of revenue in the first year—an estimated $3.6 billion—it would raise an estimated $43 billion over five years, and it probably isn't long for this world. But both Bentsen and Rostenkowski would prefer to deal with the top rate in the larger context of what they expect to be a major effort to raise revenues for next year's budget. Yet now Democratic House leaders are giving consideration to proposing an elimination of the bubble this year in connection with any cut in the capital gains rate. The President could be presented with a sticky question of whether to veto.

Given all the national needs that should be addressed, it is odd that so much energy on the part of so many important people is going into the capital gains issue—a matter of marginal importance. (The Bush Administration argues that enactment of such a tax break would spur so much investment that everyone would benefit, but the data on previous capital gains cuts put that argument in question.) Yet once everyone gets into a fight of this kind, sense of proportion is gone. People struggled for struggling's sake; a win or a loss would be interpreted as meaning a great deal, even if it didn't. Some Democrats couldn't figure out how it had come to pass that their Party had got into this fix. One theory, to which there may be some validity, is that the new Democratic House leadership had been too preoccupied with the Wright affair to move quickly enough to head off the capital gains move by the Ways and Means rebels. Byron Dorgan, Democrat of North Dakota and a member of the Ways and Means Committee, says that the capital gains imbroglio is "so illustrative of our lack of strategy and our confusion as a Democratic caucus." He adds, "If we're on the defensive on a tax cut of thirty thousand dollars for people making over two hundred thousand dollars, there's something wrong with us as a party." Dorgan continues, "Because we don't have a cohesive economic strategy, we're on the defensive. We're still reeling from the last election, and we've had a chaotic year, but we have to stand up and take on the President—not always react. There's a tendency in the Congress to negotiate, nibble around the edges, never confront. To never confront is wrong. You're always working on an agenda—the question is, Is it ours or theirs? We're always reacting to Bush's."

BOTH Foley and Mitchell have been trying to head off the President's proposal for a constitutional amendment to ban flag burning, but Foley has been more outspoken about the folly of amending the Constitution for such a purpose—as well as lowering the threshold for constitutional amendments—and he has gone further to try to prevent a floor vote on such an amendment. (The House rules do make this somewhat easier for him.) The Democratic leaders' gambit of playing for time, hoping that emotions may cool and wisdom might at least get a foot in the door, may have worked. Some congressional offices have reported that the mail in favor of a constitutional amendment has dropped off, and numerous constituents are questioning the wisdom of a constitutional amendment. The President, who may be rescued from his own bad judgment, has indicated that he might go along with a legislative ban on flag-burning rather than a constitutional amendment. Neither leader thought it possible to head off any legislation whatever on the flag issue. The House Judiciary Committee has approved a bill making it a federal crime, punishable by a fine or a year in prison or both, for anyone who "knowingly mutilates, defaces, burns or tramples upon" the flag. House leaders plan to bring the bill up in September, under a rule that requires a vote of two-thirds of the members, and bars amendments. They figure that Republicans will have no choice but to vote for the bill, and that would be the end of the matter. But they could be wrong.

ANOTHER muddle Congress has got itself into, and one which also shows the difficulty of governing in this era, has to do with the catastrophic-illness health-insurance program it approved by large margins last year. The issue raises fundamental questions about who is to pay for what governmental benefits, and about priorities. President Reagan proposed the program in 1987, and Congress wasn't about to turn away from the first major expansion of health coverage in a long time—even though a number of members had misgivings about it—if Ron-

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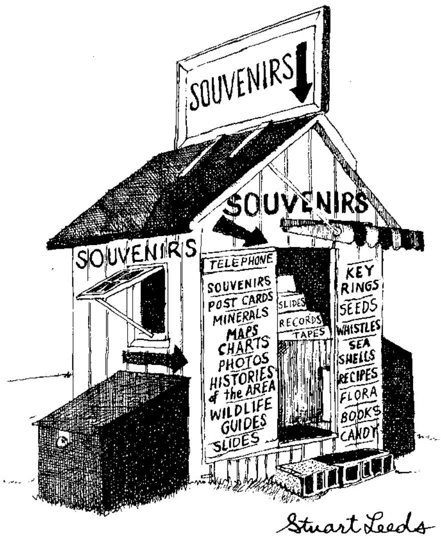
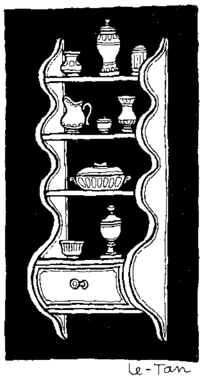
ald Reagan supported it. Many of them realized that what the elderly (and their families) really wanted was coverage for long-term care, but they looked on catastrophic-illness insurance as a first step, and an affordable one. The basic idea—proposed by Reagan and agreed to by Congress in slightly different form—was that the program would be paid for by the beneficiary group, the elderly. Social Security taxes, which finance both Social Security and Medicare, are already quite high, as well as regressive. And Medicare, which is only partly financed by the Social Security tax—the rest is supported by a premium paid by the elderly, and by general revenues—is running into serious financial difficulties, even despite congressional efforts to contain its costs. The catastrophic-care program was to be financed by a flat fee of four dollars a month, to be added to the existing Medicare premium, plus a surtax to be paid by the elderly on the basis of their income. The new program was supported by the American Association of Retired Persons, a strong lobby for the elderly. However, not long after its enactment members of Congress, and even the A.A.R.P. itself, were deluged with letters from elderly people objecting to the new program. The elderly who have their own insurance to cover the gaps left by Medicare said they didn't need the new program—even though many of their policies are inadequate—and strenuously objected to paying for it for anybody else. Only a very small percentage of the elderly have coverage comparable to that being offered under the new program. But the complaints also came from people—the majority of the elderly—who didn't have to pay the surtax. Numerous people said that they were far more concerned with getting long-term care than coverage dealing with catastrophic illnesses. In fact, many thought that what Congress had passed was long-term care. Stirring up some of the complaints was another group, the Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, headed by James Roosevelt, the late President's son, which has often driven members of Congress crazy with its direct-mail campaigns. Some polling done for the Democrats found that most of the elderly didn't know about the program, and that the protest was coming from a small group of people—about ten per cent of the elderly, a proportion large enough to write a lot of letters and make a lot of noise. The polling also found that when people were informed about the program's costs and its coverage they became more positive about it.

The upshot of the negative reaction to the program was that a number of members of Congress called for its repeal—but that presented another problem. In order to make the program actuarially sound, the financing was arranged so that the program would at first take in more than it needed; therefore, five and a half billion dollars in surplus funds from the program are in the budget currently being worked on; if the program is repealed, that money would have to be made up for in order to avoid the Gramm-Rudman sequestration. Some members want simply to change the program, making it voluntary and rearranging its costs and benefits, but that, too, is proving difficult. The House Ways and Means Committee has approved a plan to make the program voluntary, reduce the benefits, cut the surtax rate in half, and raise the four-dollar monthly premium to $7.50. The over-all result was that both the poorest and the wealthiest recipients would pay more, with the middle class paying less. However, those who opted out of the catastrophic-care program would also lose that part of the Medicare program that reimburses recipients for the cost of doctors' fees. Some members of Congress call this provision "extortionist." No one is particularly happy with the Ways and Means Committee's fix, which may encounter turbulence on the House floor; Bentsen has promised to offer the Senate a revised program in September. The apparent purposes of the Ways and Means effort were to bail out the upper middle class—the ones who were doing the most complaining—and, perhaps more important, allow members of Congress to say that they had done something to fix the program. During the recess, many members (including Rostenkowski) have been subjected to angry protests from elderly citizens unhappy both with the program and the proposed change in the program. The result could be the repeal of the whole thing, budget problem or not.

The principle that the elderly will pay for the program remains in place for now, and it's this principle that many of the elderly are complaining about. But any other solution would put more of a burden on today's workers, and could set off an intergenerational warfare that many politicians think is just around the corner. One result of this mess is some disgust with the elderly (albeit expressed quietly) on the part of a number of members of Congress—a feeling that "you can't deal with them." These members thought that there had been an explicit understanding that first there would be the catastrophic program, financed by the elderly, and then, later, there might be a program of long-term care, which would be financed at least partially through general revenues (and would be far more expensive). There is a feeling now that this understanding was broken by the elderly. Some members are beginning to say (albeit quietly) that the elderly are doing better in this society than the working population, among whom the percentage of people in poverty has increased in the last decade, while among the elderly, it's down. But, naturally, the elderly don't feel they're doing particularly well. Some members are saying that preventive health care for children should have greater priority than more programs for the elderly, as should coverage for the thirty-seven million Americans who have no health insurance at all. Each isolated solution to some part of the large health-care problem creates its own new set of problems, and now sets off class as well as generational conflicts. A number of members say that the uproar over catastrophic care makes long-term health legislation less likely.



THE beating that the President's defense program took in the House in late July also arose from a lack of consensus on what to do in an era of tight budgets. As many members see more of a squeeze coming on government expenditures, they are all the more inclined to cut items they consider of less priority so as to preserve their own priorities. Added to the lack of consensus on what is actually needed for our defense is the new international mood that has been established by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Defense Department authorities can say all they want about the necessity of being prepared for all eventualities, including Gorbachev's possible downfall and a newly aggressive Soviet Union, but it's harder now to convince a great many members of Congress that the Soviet Union will launch an all-out war against the United States. In addition, the Administration's defense program wasn't rational. There may be all sorts of reasons why the Administration wants funding for two land-based mobile missiles—to put the fifty existing ten-warhead MX missiles on railroad cars, and develop the single-warhead Midgetman missile—but it doesn't seem rational. Actually, one reason the Administration asked for both weapons ($1.8 billion for the MX and a hundred million for the Midgetman) is that for many years now Congress and the Administration have been unable to settle the question of which mobile missile we should have.



The proposal to fund both the MX and the Midgetman represented a shaky deal between the Administration and certain members of Congress who support the Midgetman—in particular, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Les Aspin, and Nunn. But the deal (which had lasted, tenuously, since 1983) fell apart in the House: Democrats voted to cut nearly half the funds for the MX, and in retaliation Republicans, abetted by Democratic liberals, voted to kill the Midgetman. Both missiles fared better in the Senate, which essentially gave the President what he asked. It was no surprise that the House cut funding for S.D.I., since it usually does, but the Senate came very close to doing so as well—so close that Vice-President Quayle was in the chair in case his vote was needed to break a tie. The problem S.D.I. is encountering is that its definition has changed so many times since Reagan first proposed it, as a space-based umbrella protecting all of the United States from nuclear attack. Its latest formulation, something called Brilliant Pebbles, backed enthusiastically by Quayle, and thought up and sold to the Bush Administration by the same scientists who sold Reagan on S.D.I. in the first place, envisions putting thousands of rockets into space, which, guided by sensors and lasers (as yet untested), would throw themselves at incoming Soviet missiles and knock them out before they reached the United States. Many people, including the outgoing chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral William Crowe, are openly dubious. (Support of S.D.I. has become a right-wing litmus test.) Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona and a member of the Armed Services Committee, says, "The big problem is you keep investing the money and you expect to get a project. We haven't got anything—not even a laser beam." (Thus far, over fifteen billion dollars has been spent on S.D.I.)

The problems encountered in Congress by the B-2, or Stealth, bomber, which is supposed to be invisible to enemy radar, also stemmed from the competition for federal funds, the declining perceived threat from the Soviet Union, and the government's shifting rationale for this weapon as well. The shock expressed by members of Congress at the plane's cost—now five hundred and thirty million dollars a plane—was a bit disingenuous; even though the plane's development had been wrapped in secrecy, a number of members had known all along that its cost was soaring to almost unimaginable heights. The Pentagon was ultimately seeking a hundred and thirty-two B-2s, at an estimated cost—for now—of about seventy billion dollars. Aspin tried to warn Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney that the cost was becoming politically insupportable. McCain says, of members of Congress expressing shock at the price of the B-2, "They did a pale imitation of Claude Rains playing the inspector in 'Casablanca.' " As questions arose as to whether the United States actually needs a new bomber that could pene-

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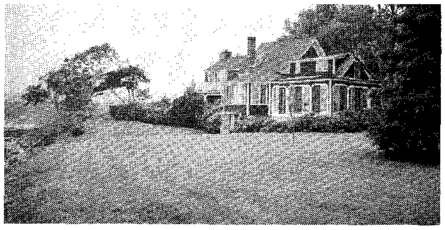

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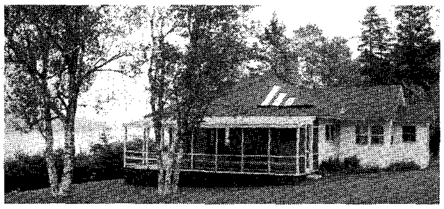

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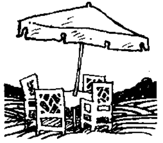

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trate Soviet airspace in case of an all-out war—even if there was a need for still more destruction we already have a "standoff" bomber that can fire cruise missiles into the Soviet Union from outside its limits—the military shifted the rationale and said that the B-2 would be quite useful against Third World countries, such as Libya. The House limited to four the number of B-2s that could be procured in the next two years (the Administration had requested eight), and froze spending on any new bombers unless the cost was curbed and it was proved that the bomber could penetrate Soviet airspace. (The first B-2 was first tested, for simple maneuvers only, just before the House voted.) The Senate approved all eight bombers, provided they meet certain performance tests.

House Democrats did manage to restore in the defense budget two weapons—the F-14 fighter plane, and the V-22, a new vertical-takeoff transport plane sought by the Marines—which Cheney had sought to cut. Members of Congress from the areas where these weapons are or were to be made—especially Thomas Downey, a Democrat who represents the Long Island district where the F-14 is manufactured—made an all-out effort to protect jobs in their districts. Though Downey was helped by the House leadership (in particular, Gephardt), who made the restoration of these weapons a Party issue and used their whip organization to help, some leading Democrats were uneasy about the idea of taking up individual members' weapons issues in order to help them in their reëlection. One House Democrat said to me at the time, "Now there is the problem of the Democratic Party's being seen as *not* against defense; in the past, at least, we could make the point that we're against fat—but now all we're for is the fat." He added, "The impression will be that the House and the Congress are incapable of making tough decisions when it comes to cutting the defense budget—which is true." After the House finished its work on the bill, Aspin said to me, "Everyone's behaving irresponsibly on this because there is no downside risk. No one's afraid of the Russians."

PRESIDENT BUSH didn't intend to get caught up in another "hostage crisis"—of the sort that had ruined one Presidency and came close to destroying another—but he was ineluctably drawn into one after holders of American hostages in Lebanon said that they had hanged one hostage, Lieutenant Colonel William Higgins, and might kill another in retaliation against the Israeli kidnapping of a terrorist leader in southern Lebanon. Not everyone in the upper reaches of the Administration thought it was a good idea for the President to go into a crisis mode when the news (and pictures) of Higgins' supposed hanging broke; but the President broke off a trip en route to making a speech in Las Vegas, and returned to the White House for meetings with top advisers and congressional leaders. If he hadn't, he'd probably have been criticized for that, too. In an effort to downplay the crisis atmosphere a little bit, the meeting between Bush and his national-security team was held in the Cabinet Room rather than in the White House Situation Room—a secure basement room in which important military matters are considered. This nuance, however, was probably lost on the public. The Administration's initial anger at Israel—which was reflected in a strong statement by Dole on the Senate floor—faded as the crisis began to look like an opportunity. (But tensions between the two nations on other matters remain.) Israel spoke of trying to get a large exchange of all Western hostages for their latest captive, Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid, and perhaps others, and President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Iran's leader in the aftermath of the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, in June, began to make comments suggesting he wanted to help get the Western hostages released. But the Administration, while encouraged, could not be sure how much authority Rafsanjani yet held in Iran, and once again we were all back to becoming instant experts on something we knew very little about. (We used to toss around names like Bakhtiar and Ghotbzadeh and thought we knew what we were talking about.) And then the signals from Iran began to shift, as other Iranian leaders made negative statements about helping get the Western hostages released, and a sense of déjà vu came over Washington.

While the President phoned numerous world leaders, and hints that negotiations were proceeding through this country or that appeared in the press, the Administration also sought to convey the impression that it had been prepared to use force if the second hostage, Joseph Cicippio, was murdered. (Much of the media played into the terrorists' hands by displaying the gruesome pictures of Higgins—on television, we saw his body swaying.) Typically, members of Congress were hopping up and down with outrage. The media brought out their "Hostage Crisis" logos. Once again, American ships were moved toward the eastern Mediterranean, and after Cicippio's life was spared the Administration let it be known that it had been prepared to bomb Baalbek, in eastern Lebanon, where terrorist training camps are.

But there is reason to wonder. Baalbek had been a potential target all during the Reagan Administration, but it wasn't attacked for the same reason that no other military action was taken against terrorists holding hostages: such action would jeopardize the lives of other hostages; innocent civilians would get killed; international opinion would be inflamed; and the action wasn't likely to end the taking of hostages, or other acts of terrorism. Moreover, since Baalbek is known to be a United States target, what an Administration official calls, "the occupancy rate" fluctuates. During this latest crisis, the idea was bandied about by some experts appearing on television—most prominently by Henry Kissinger—that the time had come to take military action to "end" terrorism, or, at least, "state-sponsored terrorism," but, as one Administration official says, this is not a problem that can be "solved" but one that an Administration can only try to manage. At best, this official says, "You can get governments to pull back tactically when it serves their interests." A certain mythology has developed that the American raid on Libya in April, 1986, successfully deterred further Libyan-sponsored terrorist acts, but in fact Libya was soon back at supporting terrorist acts, including, three days after the raid on Libya, an attempted bombing of an American officers' club in Turkey. There followed other similar events that pointed to Libya. But the Reagan Administration declared the raid on Libya a success, and most people bought the line. A former Reagan Administration official says, "It was like the George Aiken approach to the Vietnam War—they simply pretended

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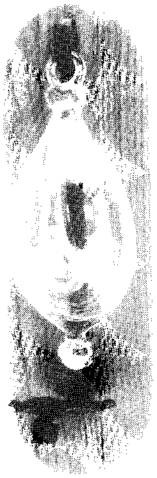

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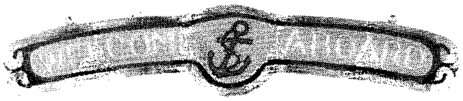

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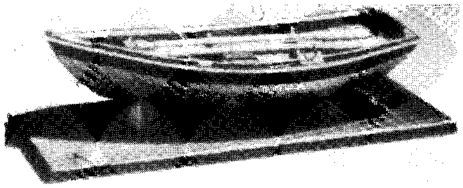

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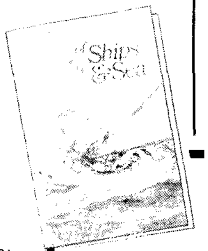

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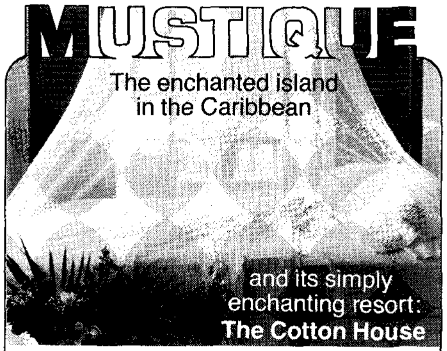
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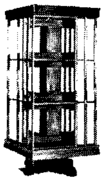

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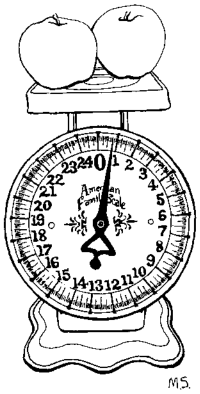
that the attack was wildly successful."

As time wore on, and rumors of this or that possible breakthrough in the latest hostage crisis were aired, the Bush Administration gave signs of optimism, even though it couldn't know which possible third parties actually had the authority, or control, to deliver. The President talked a great deal about the hostage matter, even as there were some efforts to downgrade it, to change the subject. And, of course, the President continued to say that he would not negotiate for the hostages' release—which was, of course, however indirectly, what he was doing.



Throughout this latest hostage episode, there have been complaints, on the part of the President as well as of Congress, about the inadequacy of our intelligence, especially about where the hostages are being held. The criticism is that HUMINT, or the collection of intelligence by humans on the ground, had been allowed to deteriorate during the Carter years. But while it is true that the emphasis on human intelligence declined during the Carter Administration, that doesn't answer all of the questions about our capabilities in the Middle East, particularly Iran and Lebanon. With the overthrow of the Shah, and the upheaval in Lebanon that began in the early nineteen-eighties, a lot of our "assets" left these countries or were otherwise no longer able to be of service. Further, there were no governments through which we could operate. Then, oddly, William Casey, Reagan's C.I.A. director, who considered himself the great spymaster, didn't move to rebuild the HUMINT network. Work on this only began after Casey died, in 1987—and it continues. The gathering and analyzing of information about Iran has improved, but is obviously still limited.

But there seem to be some illusions about what even the best human-intelligence network could accomplish. After all, the Israelis, who are supposed to be very good at this sort of thing, don't know where their three P.O.W. s are being held in Lebanon. (Capturing Sheikh Obeid was no big deal; he was a public figure, acting openly, and he wasn't in Beirut.) Senator David Boren, Democrat of Oklahoma and chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, says that penetrating the Hezbollah, which is believed to be holding the hostages, is nearly impossible. The Hezbollah, Boren says, is actually an umbrella group, made up of small, loosely connected units—of from about thirty to a hundred people—who are not under anyone's strict command. Boren says, "It's like trying to infiltrate someone into an organized-crime family." He adds, "It's not enough that you have someone who is of the same background and speaks the language and knows the culture. It's not like putting a Texan into Texas. These people are literally family—they live together in tight little neighborhood communities. It would be like putting a stranger in my neighborhood in Seminole, Oklahoma. Everyone knows who everyone is." Apparently, it's easier to penetrate the K.G.B. Even if we knew where all the hostages were being held, that would still leave daunting problems in trying to extricate them—and even if we got a fix on where some of them were at some time, it's very unlikely we'd get a fix on all of them, so the lives of at least some would be put at risk by military action.

The President, at his press conference on Tuesday—before he left town for a three-week vacation—conveyed frustration over what had also frustrated his predecessors. He said, "We hear different signals coming out of Iran, some in the old mode and then some that offer more hope." He invited—close to implored—Iran to be friends with us again. When asked why he hadn't retaliated for the death of Higgins, he replied, "I don't want to be responsible for the loss of innocent life. I also must weigh, if we considered military action, the lives of the Americans that were being asked to carry out that action. . . . But if I could find a way to take those hostages, get them and bring them out, and that required using the military force of the United States, make no mistake about it, I would do it in an instant." The President also said that he didn't think that "we're any closer to seeing the hostages released than we were, say, about three weeks ago."

—Elizabeth Drew

BOOKS

North of the Future

BETWEEN trains, some twenty years ago, I browsed in a Frankfurt bookstore. A volume of poems, slimmer than slim, in a wrapper of austere white, caught my eye. The very first line I read told of a language "north of the future." That line went through me like a quiet flame. A neighboring poem spoke of the recession of words—hopelessly wasted, sullied by the bestiality of our age—into stones. (I learned later that the wife of the poet was a distinguished lithographer.) In that north of the future, when the ash of the death ovens had found peace, had become lit with remembrance, those stones, word-charged, would speak. It was only then, I seem to recall, that I turned back to the title page and the poet's name, Paul Celan. Somehow, it struck me as a pen name, and later I learned that the writer's real name was Paul Antschel. But I knew with certainty that the poems and the voice of Paul Celan (was he alive and, if so, where, and had he published other collections?) would alter my inward existence as only the very greatest art, music, philosophic-metaphysical argument, or poetry can do.

Persea Books has now brought out a wide-ranging selection, "Poems of Paul Celan" ($24.95), in the German original and with facing-page translations by Michael Hamburger. How am I to proceed? The self-evident impulse is to say, "Go at once and buy this book. Insist that your bookstore order it if it has not yet done so. Borrow it from a friend while you wait for your own copy. Steal it if you must. But, now that Celan is in some measure available in English, let him enter your life. At risk. Knowing that he will change it. Knowing that his poems are like the 'Archaic Torso of Apollo,' which in Rilke's famous poem bids us do precisely that: 'Now change your life.' " And with that this review or any other should end.

But there are obstacles to so plain an imperative. Even the native German-speaker may find himself utterly baffled by many of Celan's lyrics—particularly those from the later phases of his work. Celan's poetry and prose—he published a handful of speeches and a parable, which are transforming the landscape of poetic theory and of the philosophy of language—are among the most resistant in Western literature to ready understanding. In a poem, the difficulties are, as it were, layered. They surround a core of overwhelming directness with successive screens of "alternative codes," as in those multilayered manuscripts and parchments we call palimpsests. Very often, the initial veil is biographical. Celan's life—as a child during the Holocaust, as an exile in Paris, as a translator from half a dozen languages, as one inebriate with the light-bursts of Jerusalem and of the beloved woman he encountered there—is immensely complex. No one who met him, it seems, failed to sense the sombre radiance, the desolation and apartness of his being. But as yet we know little about him. Celan's discretions and elisions were labyrinthine. He could, under pressure of nervous exhaustion or in brief moments of luminous confiding, lay himself bare to certain friends. But on the whole he detested and strove to frustrate the prying gossip, the inquisitions into the lived source of poetic invention which plague a journalistic culture. There are elements that remain enigmatic about his death—by suicide, in Paris in 1970. In consequence, much that we cannot grasp in Celan's poems may one day be cleared up by the decipherment of their contingent biographical references to and their disguised nominations of this or that place and incident, and by an authorized chronology that would allow us to unravel Celan's playfulness with dates. No edition so far, in German or in any other language, has the information needed.

A second stratum of difficulty is that of technique. Some of Celan's most famous finds—"black milk," the "blood-ray of the moon," filaments of light, of vegetable green, and of nerves which are also hair and the spindrift of dreams—have their stylistic provenance in the world of Rimbaud and of Russian orphic Futurism and of the

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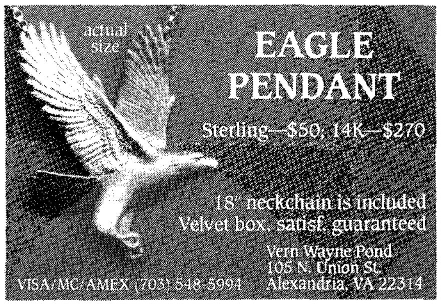

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Surrealist masters. But Celan goes much farther. His best poems make haiku seem wasteful. Their conciseness is such that the only legitimate way of reading them is by Talmudic and Cabalistic methods. This is to say that in Celan minimal units of language—the individual syllable, sometimes the single letter—matter unconditionally. These poems are, indeed, "lithographs"—letters, markers of "black fire," incised in stone. The syntax is compressed into a kind of implosive tension. The modifiers, the pronominal detours, the connectives that have given modern Western discourse its logical fluency, its openness to understanding and to paraphrase, are chiselled away. There is in Celan an anathema on "talk" (here he is at one with the great philosopher Martin Heidegger, one of the few crucial presences in Celan's later life and writings), which is the contrary of "saying":

> Led home into oblivion
> the sociable talk of
> our slow eyes.
>
> Led home, syllable after syllable, shared
> out among the dayblind dice, for which
> the playing hand reaches out, large,
> awakening.
>
> And the too much of my speaking:
> heaped up round the little
> crystal dressed in the style of your silence.

In Michael Hamburger's version, however, "heaped up" fails to suggest the siege of a city and the nomadic note in "*angelagert*," and "dressed" doesn't catch the resonance of meditation and self-withdrawal of "*Eintracht in Tracht*."

Add to this the inwoven multilingualism of Celan's idiom. Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian, French, and Italianate words, turns of phrase, acoustic transparencies abound in his German. The Psalms, the poetry of Mandelstam, Shakespearean tags (Celan's translations from the Sonnets are rigorous and incomparable) are raw material that enters the fabric of Celan's verse hardly modified. As John Felstiner, of Stanford University, himself a penetrating translator of Celan, is showing, an awareness of the Old Testament and of the prodigal speech arts of Yiddish is indispensable to our hearing of Celan. If we know these sources, difficulties open up for us into something far more exciting—mystery. The withdrawal of our literacy from matters liturgical or theological has eroded the evidential force of that word. I want to use it in a straightforward, workshop manner. "Mystery" in art signifies the capacity of expressive forms for meaning much more than they say. It includes the leap of metaphor in language, of juxtaposition in painting, of harmonies and discord in music from which spring new ways of experiencing our own identity and that of the world. That much is common to all major art and literature. In Paul Celan's case, "mystery" takes on a more specific pressure.

Writing in German after Auschwitz, knowing himself to be of the company of Hölderlin and Rilke—that is to say, one who would be bringing further radiance and life force to the tongue in which his parents and his community (that of East European Judaism) had been condemned to hideous death—Celan sought to break through speech and syntax as we know them, even as the pioneers of abstract and minimalist painting sought to break through the constraints and privileges of representation. Celan plays, in the deepest sense of that term, both with the notion of an Adamic tongue—of words that, in some irretrievable state of grace, spoke the truth because they exactly matched the world—and with the notion of a future idiom whose clarity and whose total refusal of falsehood, of hatred, of inhumanity would tell us of the coming of the messianic hour. The ancient motif of the giving of names by Adam in Eden is constant:

> In the seminal
> sense
> the sea stars you out, inmostly, for ever.
>
> There's an end to the giving of names,
> over you I cast my fate.

(Hamburger would be the first to concede that English here is helpless before the oracular thrust of that sea "starring," or before the fractured literalness of "*Im Samen-/sinn*," in which the "seed," the "seminal," the "semantic," and the entire theme of the origins both of man and of saying are implicit.) No less frequent are intimations of a time after time, in which these poems will move into the light of immediacy.

My tentative counsel is this: the reader of, the listener to, Celan's poetry might look first at those poems (already they have classic status in German) in which the poet indicts God. The cry is as old and as new as the Holocaust:

"*Der Herr brach das Brot, /das Brot brach den Herrn*" ("The Lord broke the bread, /the bread broke the Lord"—and observe how Judaic and Christological symbols, of the Jewish blessing and of the sacramental incarnation, are conjoined). The death camps, the ash mounds are the breaking of the covenant between God and man. The God who was *not* at Auschwitz or Belsen inhabits Celan's urgent despair like an animate absence. Hence his celebrated uses of and variations on *Niemand*—"no-one." (The hyphen, though omitted by Hamburger, is vital to any full rendition of the inherent negations, refusals, closures on hope.) To enter Celan's world, one would also do well to learn by heart his famous "Psalm":

> Praised be your name, no one.
> For your sake
> we shall flower.
> Towards
> you.
>
> A nothing
> we were, are, shall
> remain, flowering:
> the nothing—, the
> no one's rose.
>
> With
> our pistil soul-bright,
> with our stamen heaven-ravaged,
> our corolla red
> with the crimson word which we sang
> over, O over
> the thorn.

And here the translation lets us down badly. The terrible flowering of innocent blood is "*Dir/entgegen.*" "Towards/you," yes, but, more emphatically, "against you." The death-Psalm is sung *against* the *Niemand*-God, the *Niemandsrose* flowers *against* its Maker. How, asks Celan in poem after poem, can He have created those destined to inhabit the ovens?

Or consider the wholly untranslatable coda to "Engführung"—perhaps the most specific of Celan's Shoah poems:

> Driven into the
> terrain
> with
> the unmistakable
> track:
>
> Grass.
> Grass,
> written asunder.

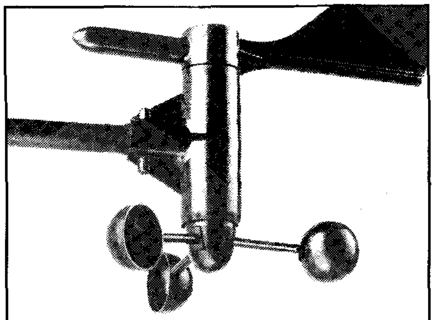
Visually and acoustically, the fragmented shards tell of the notorious railroad tracks to the camps. "*Verbracht*" is appallingly more inert, more expressive of nameless, unspeakable waste and oblivion, than "Driven into." "*Gelände*" has resonances at once vaguer and more ominous than "terrain." It hints at the earth banks over the death pits. But it is the final word that marks the greatness of Celan. Walt Whitman knew about "leaves of grass," about the chromatic and symbolic interplay between grass and the leaves of the book. Here the grass is "*auseinandergeschrieben*": dispersed, dishevelled, as by the death winds ("Shoah" also signifies such a wind)—made barren of sense and of record. And all this is only to scratch the surface. By comparison, Keats' "writ in water" is almost reassuringly literary.

Over and over, Celan put his terrible question: In the "no-oneness" of God, who "shall bear witness for the witness"? Celan and Primo Levi, before their elected deaths, came nearest to bringing human language to bear on that which no tongue ought ever to have known or articulated—on that which should, since it is morally and rationally unspeakable, terminate man's primordial contract with the wonder and "wording" (Emerson's term) of the world. That these poems exist is at once a kind of miracle of ultimate need and a kind of grievous indecency. Celan was self-laceratingly possessed of this contradiction, of the intuition that his own genius was active in the denial of the nothingness of speech and metaphor which should have followed on the Holocaust. (Why, indeed, have art and poetry not gone on strike?) But from the deeps of his incensed sorrow came, undeniably, the counterpoint of creative mastery, the conviction that

> A tree-
> high thought
> tunes in to light's pitch: there are
> still songs to be sung on the other side
> of mankind.

It is to this credo that we owe some of the most inspired lyric and love poetry in this century. And it is by attending to this second, or counter, motion that the reader can accede to the other sphere in Celan's work.

Osip Mandelstam became Celan's secret sharer. Himself done to sordid death by Stalin and Stalinist Jew-hatred, this marvellous writer found in Celan the guardian of his afterlife, the chosen partner in a posthumous dialogue: through Celan's translations, adaptations, allusions he was given a



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new force of echo. In German, *Mandel* signifies "almond." Vertiginous yet profoundly intimate and playfully loving are the chimes and changes that Celan rings on this equivalence. The Russian companion flowers in the almond tree, in its branches (*Stamm*), in the almond-shaped and tinted eyes of the beloved—itself a simile with Biblical precedent. But there is more: divided Jerusalem had its notorious Mandelbaum Gate, the almond-tree aperture between the two halves of the warring city. Thus the name of the poet, the gate of suffering and of messianic awaiting, and the flowering and eyes of the loved one are intertwined in a sequence of very late poems that are, to put it simply, among the finest witnesses to love and to uncertain but irreducible hope in any literature:

The Poles
are inside us,
insurmountable
when we're awake,
we sleep across, up to the Gate
of Mercy,

I lose you to you, that
is my snowy comfort,

say that Jerusalem *is*,

say it, as though I were this
your whiteness,
as though you
were mine,

as though without us we could be we,

I open your leaves, for ever,

you pray, you bed
us free.

Even a superficial gloss on this poem would need much space. It would point to the resonance in the German *Erbarmen* (the mercy, the compassion, of that gate), which includes both "inheritance" (*Erb*) and the "arms" with which lovers hold each other. It would dwell on the role of snow or almond-blossom whiteness in Jewish mourning and try to elucidate the sheer psychological magic in that "as though without us we could be we," whose laconic and lapidary clarity crystallizes the definition of love. "I open your leaves" is faithful to the erotic of the original but not to the deep, manifold wit: *ich blättre dich auf* means "I leaf you open" in the sense in which we "leaf through" a book (those "leaves of grass" again). It has enormous sexual, psychic, and intellectual connotations. And it is these which literally explode in the closing two lines. Here, too, English is powerless. "*Du betest, du bettest/uns frei*": even the non-reader of German can make out the wordplay on *beten* ("to pray") and *betten* ("to bed")—a verb that Brecht used sardonically in a famous song text. The intercourse of the lovers in messianic, mourning, almond-flowering Jerusalem is at once a prayer and a fusion of "we" into a final "us." Prayer may open the Gate of Mercy as bedding opens the inmost of the beloved. In these two openings, which are one, surges, like the mystery of blossoming itself, the homecoming to the other who is ourself.

What I have cursorily remarked on will have conveyed my sense of Michael Hamburger's translations. No one today has done more to bring to the English-speaking world the greatest of German poetry, that of Hölderlin, of Rilke, of Paul Celan. Himself a poet, Hamburger has been one of the most informed, scrupulously acute, and self-sacrificial of translators, an indispensable courier between languages and cultures. One's gratitude for his Celan versions, for the exceeding labor and faith that have gone into them, is unstinted. But Hamburger would, I believe, be the first to admit that Celan is as yet frequently untranslatable—both into current, everyday German and into other tongues. It will take a long time for our sensibilities to apprehend poetry of these dimensions and this radicality. Like any great pioneering art form—non-objective painting, twelve-tone or atonal music—Celan's poetry will very gradually educate perception. What we can do at present is listen, misunderstand fruitfully, let the as yet hidden clarities in Celan's language and insights be patient within us. "*Hohles Lebensgehöft*" ("Hollow homestead of life": the neologism is no "easier" in German than in English), says Celan. One day, this body of poetry and prose may do something to help fill that hollow, that black hole of our inhuman age. But not quite yet.

—George Steiner

•

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[*From an article by Steven Englund in The Christian Century*]

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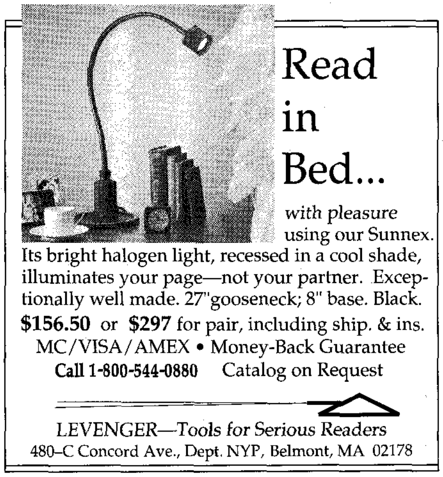
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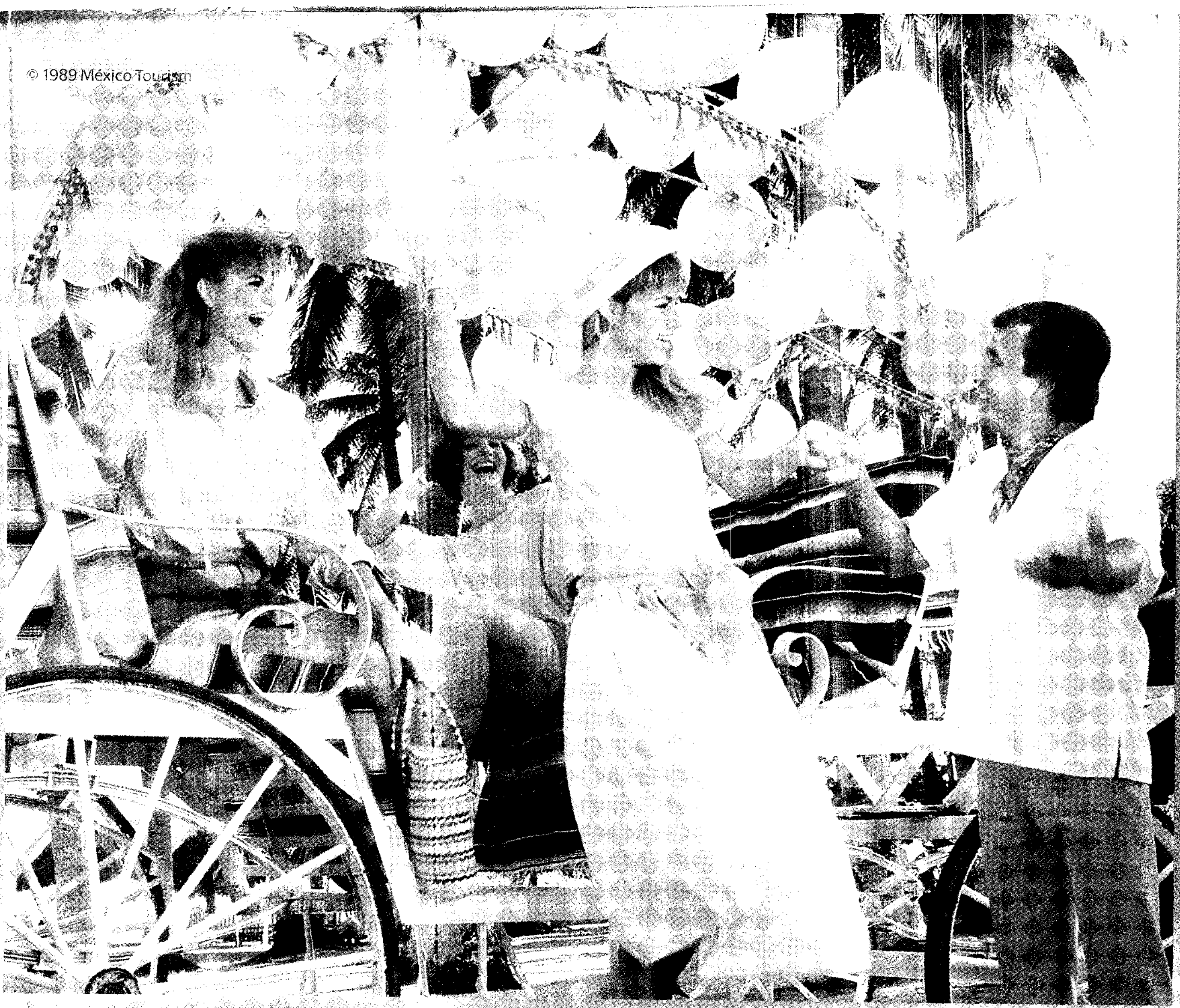

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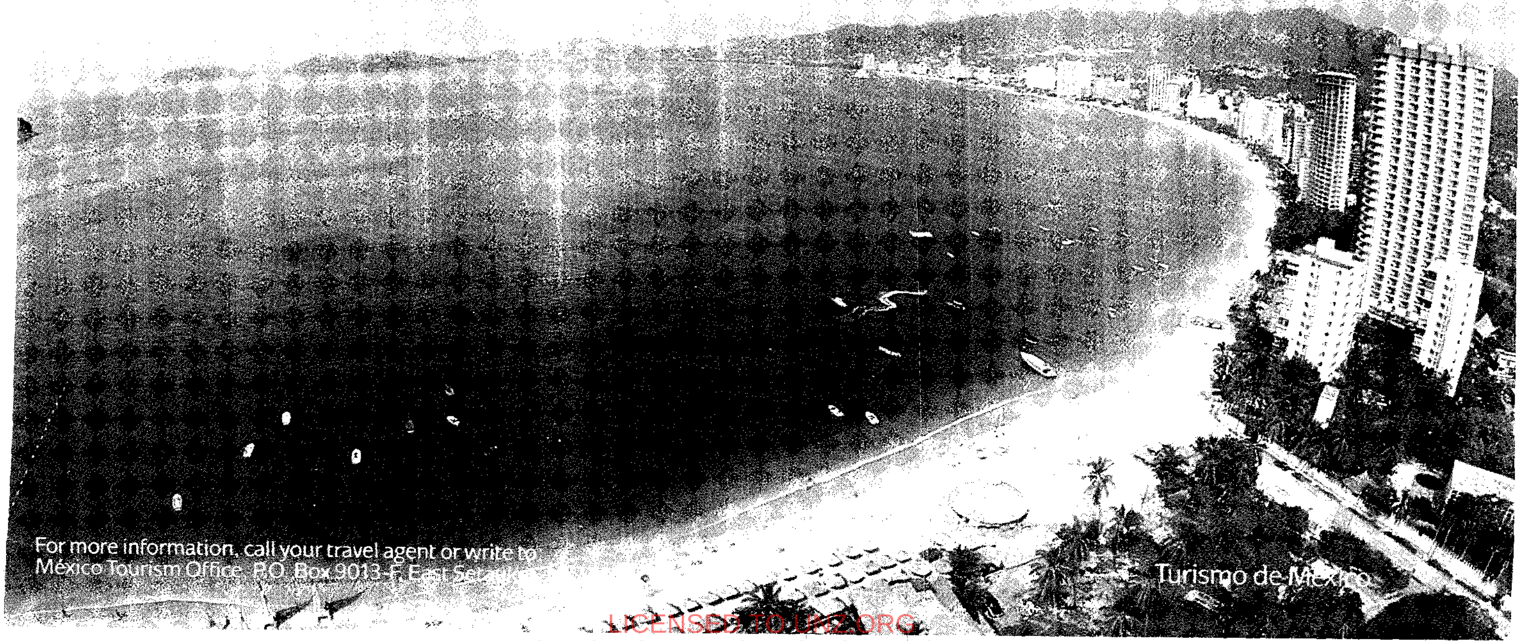

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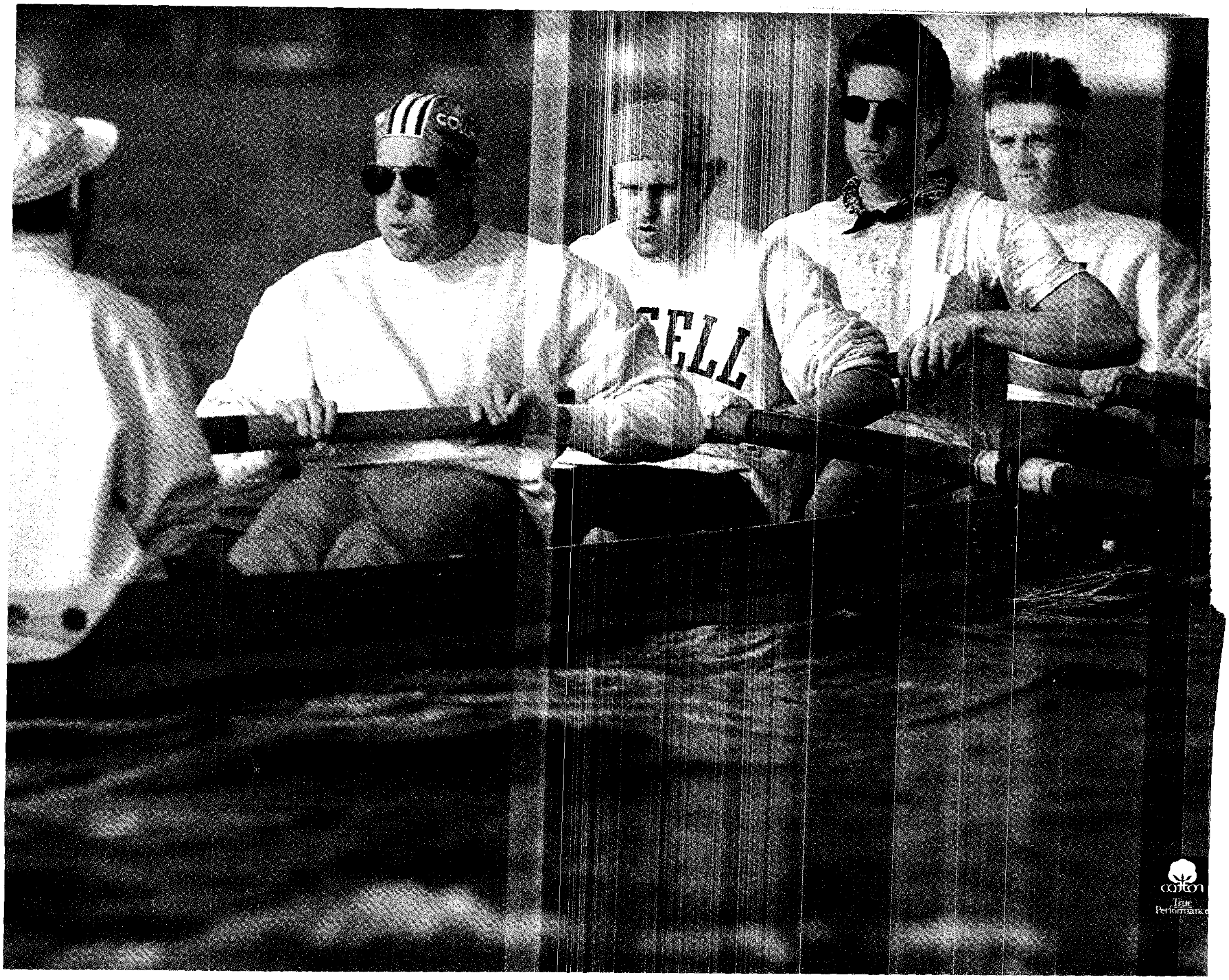
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